The
SMART SET
A Magazine of
Clever
EN NOTABLE SHORT STO IES
INCLUDING
ey Call It Love"
By EDGAR JEPSON
PERIODICAL DIVISION
SEP
1917

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Vol. LIII OCTOBER, 1917 No. 2

The SMART SET

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BURLESQUES, EPIGRAMS, POEMS, SHORT SATIRES, ETC.

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SEP 13 1917

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Vol. LIII OCTOBER, 1917 No. 2

The SMART SET

The Aristocrat Among American Magazines

A WALK IN THE WASTES OF TIME

By Lord Dunsany

I MET a Spirit once in the wastes of time, as I wandered far from here, and knew him for one of the chiefs of the elder spirits of joy. And when I returned I went to his family, that dwelt in a land we know, and spoke to them of the spirit. And they spake ill of him.

I went then to the neighbourhood where he was wont to live, and there I spake of that elder spirit of joy: and they said little good of the spirit they knew.

Then I went to all the spirits of those that dwelt on Earth in his time; I found them where they were gathered in the fields whither spirits go, and to them I spoke of the meeting at night in the wastes of time. Some knew the spirit I met, some knew him not, and scarcely any cared. It was not them he had toiled for.

I left the fields in which those spirits were. I turned me round and traveled and came to Posterity. To them also I spake of my meeting in the lonely wastes of time. And lo, as I spake they all bowed to me. Lo, as I spake I saw them all kneeling before my feet, making me reverence because I had walked with that spirit.

THE THIRTY-SIX DRAMATIC SITUATIONS

In the Life of a Woman

By Karl W. Kessler

I—The first kiss from a man.
II— " " " " " married man.
III— " " " " " bachelor.
IV— " " " " " widower.
V— " " " " " college boy.
VI— " " " " " soldier.
VII— " " " " " poet.
VIII— " " " " " politician.
IX— " " " " " chauffeur.
X— " " " " " man with blue eyes.
XI— " " " " " " " gray eyes.
XII— " " " " " " " brown eyes.
XIII— " " " " " " " whiskers.
XIV— " " " " " " " a dimple.
XV— " " " " " " " heart trouble.
XVI— " " " " " " " a desire for more.
XVII— " " " " " " who enjoys it.
XVIII— " " " " " " " doesn't.*
XIX— " " " " " " whose wife is jealous.
XX— " " " " " " in the morning.
XXI— " " " " " " at noon.
XXII— " " " " " " at night.
XXIII— " " " " " " in love.
XXIV— " " " " " " who isn't in love.
XXV— " " " " " " who is strong.
XXVI— " " " " " " " " weak.
XXVII— " " " " " " " " bald.
XXVIII— " " " " " " who eats onions.
XXIX— " " " " " " " " cloves.
XXX— " " " " " " " is drunk.
XXXI— " " " " " " " holds on.
XXXII— " " " " " " " weeps.
XXXIII— " " " " " " in a bathing suit.
XXXIV— " " " " " " in flannels.
XXXV— " " " " " " in evening dress.
XXXVI— " " " " " " who sneezes.

**Usually the husband.*

A WOMAN OF FORTY

By Maurice Joy

IT is quite possible that you knew the Honourable Mrs. Dartry as well as I did and that, consequently, you regretted quite as much as I her obscure death last year, for I assume that you are a gallant man or charming woman, as I would have my audience be. But if, by chance, you did not know her, or only know her story as it was told maliciously in the clubs or, more maliciously, in newspapers instigated by members of her own sex, I should like to be the humble instrument of vindicating, by means of the merry truths she herself loved, the career of one who (as a Cabinet member, an ancient flame, said when he heard of her dissolution) was a "political bird of paradise, fulgurous with the feathers of brilliant intrigue." And if you did know her, I beg that you will forgive me if my words but poorly reflect the sheen of that radiant plumage, and acknowledge merely my devotion to her gracious memory.

At least I shall tell the story as it happened of that last tragic incident which caused her ostracism when, like the shy animal we do not count heroic, she stripped (as it strips the down from its breast to make a nest for its young) all the feathers from her achievement to warm the fledgling genius of one who was then in the twilight of his political babyhood and is to-day so prominent that fame waits on him like a lackey at his table. How curiously that image suggests itself, for I well remember her sage advice to the political bantling at his first dinner—"Do not eat so fast, my dear, or you will never be Prime Minister."

There was a certain attractive impetuosity about the boy whose star Mrs. Dartry was first to see and know as it swam into the vague firmament of promising young men, and with that a touch of the old bull-dog, famed for grit, which appealed readily to a woman of her mettle. Under the broad and somewhat heavy face, with its eager and calculating expression, were a pair of shoulders boastful of strength, and limbs clean and springing that filled her woman's eye,

Given the brain, what a chance there was for her, she said to herself, to develop Colossus! And with a zest she set about the work when she found that the boy had a heart, too, and a gallant one at that, as she thought, for he laid it at her feet so swiftly that even she was surprised, and so swiftly that even she, at whose hand's reach stood the fifty-odd well-beloved volumes of the *Comedie Humaine,* and who knew the tragic tale of the beautiful de Beauseant backwards and forwards, was easily won.

She was forty and therefore careless, you will say, when she accepted this love, but at least she knew that she was careless, and "it is not the goal that matters but the road" was ever her motto. (Gossip should have treated more kindly one who never left its ceaseless tongue without some merry tale.)

Came a time when the boy, freshly laurelled from Oxford, was champing for his head. Those were hard months for Mrs. Dartry. Voluble, eloquent even, he was above all dogmatic and fearless, and she would have him listen gravely if only to learn how easily character outstrips intellect in the race for

political office. And he did listen in time—"Gad, but she has the nasty colt on the bit," said old Lord Framley, whom the boy had sharply contradicted but a short time before and who suddenly found him gravely reverential and docile. "She'll make a Prime Minister of Synnott yet."

Her heart warmed to the boy when she saw him check at her bidding and let many a victory of wit go by because he trusted her wisdom. He believed that she loved him and he was right; yet many had believed it before and found themselves standing bewildered and deserted in a perfumed air, scarcely certain that a thing of substance had been in their arms.

At last there came that time when the old Conservative war horses, spavined and winded, were floundering at their work, and the wise saw that their day of reckoning was near. Young Synnott had the eye, and he was of no mind to waste his youth in patching up their cuts and bruises, though he did come of the old Tory stock.

He had no *flair* for Utopias, "but if there is to be a Liberal reaction," said he to himself, "I'd best begin to crystallize my youthful indiscretions into abiding principles of human justice and look for a seat in the House." His youthful indiscretions were a flaming restatement or two of Tom Paine in the Union at Oxford. The seat was not easy to find; the young lions of the Liberal party had spent their roaring childhood in the wilderness and were in no mood to cede their own appetites when at last their hungry nostrils scented a feast of power. To Mrs. Dartry then the young man went and laid his case before her.

"I'm sorry, Bunny," she told him, "that you're going to join the Rads. A man of breeding amongst them is like a heron amongst crows."

She meant the image, too, meant that he would have to battle inland among cackling hordes instead of standing aloof by the great secular sea of tradition with only his own rare kind to dispute his dominion.

"What does the label matter?" he answered her. "I shall be I to the Speaker's left or to his right. One chooses now merely how he will serve the blind god, Demos; there is no longer any question of mastering him."

"Or even giving him eyes?"

"He would be more dangerous with eyes. Let him tell us in his drunken way what he wants and let us give it to him. Then he will remember us as good and faithful stewards."

"You are all for fame."

"For power rather—it is the only thing that matters."

"When one is young," she murmured quietly, not wholly at ease as the image of the great heron took heavy wing from her mind and the swift, poiseful darting of a hawk came before her. And she went on—"What seat have you thought of?"

"None that I care for. I can have a forlorn fight if I wish it, but I'm too impatient for that."

"Yet it might not hurt your mettle. I wonder if things have come too easily for you."

"They have come only as I was able to take them—you know that."

She smiled at the arrogance, and a little self-consciously he added, "You must know it, since it was you who taught me how to take them."

This was the kind of thing that ever pleased her—let caution take to its heels! She loved flattery. "It is not truth," she used to say, "but it is a form of truth, and I would as soon be served by a man's imagination as by his conscience." So she sat by him at a table, a map spread before them over which her fingers floated like a bee from flower to promising flower. For this constituency old Squareface sat, a quick conscience making his ancient bones rattle; he would not yield. And for this sat wizened Mugwump, who dearly loved a lord but who had become starlike thirty years before with a speech in denunciation of feudalism and now clung to his periods long after his principles had vanished and voted Radical as often as his gout allowed him to

walk through the lobbies. Perhaps he would yield to the Tory eaglet now miraculously changed into a suckling dove that cooed of peace, retrenchment and reform!

But no, as Synnott remembered, Mugwump's son-in-law would surely have that seat. Then on and on, over broad acres peopled by docile hodges, the pillars of society, northwards into the land where narrow streets and long hours make hard, pinched faces and quick eyes. There at last Mrs. Dartry's fluttering finger paused, and as the intrepid explorer stared over sundering billows to be conquered, she fixed her eye on the goal.

"Hodgins!" she paused in ecstasy—"Hodgins is our man."

And who did not know him, shrewd sensual man who had been blessed by Heaven with youthful dyspepsia and invented a medicine to cure himself, make him famous and bring him the fortune out of which he had so generously contributed to the Liberal campaign funds that, while still young, Mr. Gladstone had bestowed on him a baronetcy "for his services to humanity."

"The Knight of the Garter!" exclaimed Synnott.

"Hush!" said Mrs. Dartry. "Nothing now but respect—we need him."

What a garter it was of which he was the knight, as gossip told! Fifty-five and unmarried, walking pompously up the floor of the House he had dropped the silken thing from his pocket. There was a titter and Mrs. Dartry, in the gallery, gave him the mocking title. Not that he minded it, for he liked a gallant name without a definite scandal. And when, soon afterwards, he married the young and lovely daughter of a crested but impoverished family the laugh, you might say, was on his side.

"But why should he yield to me?" said Synnott. "The old cock has many crows in him yet, and he loves to stand on his dunghill."

"The image already drawn from the vulgar mint!" said Mrs. Dartry with a quizzing smile, and then, folding up her map, "He will yield, or I have lived in a world of vain and foolish imagining."

"You know him well?"

"Very, very well—I have met him three times."

"Three times!"

"Once on the Terrace—I was curious then; once at Ascot, when that outsider of his won the Hunt Cup; and once, yes, very, very much once under a lilac bush."

"He made love to you?"

"As runs the summer day from a hesitant morning to a blazing noon and . . . and I left him in an uncertain twilight; he is there yet."

"The rascal — married but three years!"

"A year of conquest, a year of satisfaction and a year of boredom. My dear, he rises above the commandments as loftily as if he were one of ourselves."

"What about the sanctimonious ministers who support him?"

"They cannot see the man for the pills," she answered. "His horses made some trouble at first, but the old hypocrite has assured them that he never bets and that he gives all his stakes to charity, and even some of the fruits of his . . . his pillage. Forgive me that atrocious pun—it was meant to drive you away. There is not a moment to be lost—I assume you will stand for Mudshire if you are offered it."

"The majority?" he queried.

"He had three thousand last time," she smiled at his caution.

"If you can do this, Violet . . ."

"You will get me a place in the gallery for your maiden speech, won't you?" she broke in, in his embrace; but the light of love shone for the moment less in her eyes than the light of battle, and in a minute she dismissed him.

She did not often meditate on fate or life ("Meditation swoops down on beauty like a devouring eagle," she used to say), but today when Synnott was gone, she felt the great wings impending above her graceful head. And she darted from them, throwing for the appeasement of the avid beak no more

than a passing melancholy in her eyes which, because it dimmed their lustre, left her for the moment looking her age. She needed no mirror to see it. Would her love, she wondered, be the chariot of the sun only to be discarded by her Apollo when he had attained his highest heaven, and to fall to the earth there to rot away in time like a rumbling and ramshackle omnibus? What if it did? How sweet would be the one triumphant penultimate moment poised in middle air! A little malice may be pardoned her.

"If ever there is another woman," she said, "it will be my ghost that moves the arms wherein she will find her delight."

I do not say that I can give you, second for second, what Mrs. Dartry went through in this poignant case. Nor would I if I could (though you may condemn the old-fashioned sentiment) lay bare every quiver of that undaunted heart. "Where the heart is, there the will must also be, my dear," she had once said to a lachrymose friend who had threatened dire vengeance on her heart's possessor; discovering him unfaithful, and she had gone on—"If those two do not work in harness with the heart for leader, a woman will be left to the devil." You will catch her meaning; which I at least take to be that full-hearted sin (I mean no knavish tricks) wins nearer to redemption than reluctant virtue. And she herself was full-hearted now. Synnott had betrayed more than he would have done had two more lustra been added to his years, but not more than she must have known.

So! Power was more to him than love, but if he loved power, did she not love it too? Had she indeed ever loved anything else? She asked herself the question and did not dare to answer it, since her feet suddenly seemed to forget the tripping measures to which they had danced.

"The tune is changed, not I," she said by way of reassuring herself; and it is to her credit that when she lifted the receiver to speak to Sir Josiah Hodgins, there was a lilt in her voice like the laughter of a nymph enticing Pan and a swiftness in her mood for which I can name you no equal save that of a salmon darting hither and thither in shallow waters on a summer's morn.

The baronet was at home and was at her service—the gallant man! She wanted to bring a promising colt to see him—young Synnott—why, yes, of course, he had heard of the boy and would be delighted to see him—and honored to have her with all her wit and beauty. A little clumsy that, but the best the man could do, and Mrs. Dartry, upon her great occasions, made him feel the blush at the wire's length.

Whereat the amorous man rejoiced, for he knew himself the very devil of a fellow. Of course they must come to luncheon any day—tomorrow?—why, of course tomorrow—he had a Rodin to show them. Mrs. Dartry could not believe her ears and had the name repeated. She had heard aright; and, "Oh, Lord," she said to herself, "what will the man do next?" It irked her that the glory of her beloved France should be purchasable by one whom she could more easily imagine buying certain postcards on the boulevards. But there!—it was an age of democracy; and accepting the thing, she told him his fame as an art connoisseur was already widespread. That flattered him into promising her a copy of the priceless work. And so on . . . and so on . . . she would bring Synnott to lunch next day.

And to lunch they went.

II

Into that upper air of society where Mrs. Dartry flew about on easy wings, the lark's song ever on her lips, Sir Josiah Hodgins never adventured. Masterful and ambitious man, his domain was of the people, wherever his dream. "No one had taken him up" as the phrase goes literally, and it will do for the metaphor. And no one could so well take him up as Violet Dartry,

since to her airy spirit the laws of gravitation did not apply.

She had the fairy's wand at whose touch weighty dullards became imponderable, when she needed them, and rose with her into the rarer airs. Not that she abused the heavenly privilege, but there were So-and-So and So-and-So and So-and-So I could name, now soaring on wings of imperial prestige, who might still be grovelling on earth if she had not needed them and acquired for them, by merely enthroning them at her table, a reputation for deliberate judgment when their wits were slow or of silent strength when they lacked a tongue.

"Is he worth knowing?" people would ask of some new man, politician, poet, painter, what-not, and the answer would come—"Violet Dartry dines him!" Her seal went farther than the king's head on a coin, for that we can test with the teeth, but who would batter the image of one so fair and so free of tongue? Her currency was honored wherever men foregathered, and though pretenders challenged her from her own sex it was but to be consumed by their own revolution, since whenever they discovered a real spirit, she would adopt him and, offering him service in her choicer army, make the flattered man her own. She drew from every party, outwardly espousing no cause, giving to the drama of affairs only the allegiance of a witty spectator, and keeping for her real concern the devious ways of her own heart. And they were devious, as Gossip no doubt has told you, but yet so discreet that the garrulous hag was forever floundering around the morass outside the gardens of love and only guessing, from some fleeting glance as through a wind-blown bush, what was taking place inside.

Sir Josiah, the shrewd man, knew all this, knew that no one could so radiantly imp the wings of his ambition as could Mrs. Dartry, but he played politics only for position, as she well knew, and his mind was less on Westminster than on a certain lilac-bush when he saw her sail through the doors of his drawing-room leading the young colt, Synnott, groomed like a thoroughbred in the paddock. The baronet scarcely gave him an eye, but an eye was enough—the young fellow's mettle was evident. But was she his mistress? Doubtless! "Well, the old horse for a distance!" said he to himself.

It was, you must know, Mrs. Dartry's first visit to the house, and in truth she found herself bewildered enough, for had the baronet himself worn a string of diamonds on his watch-chain he could scarcely have seemed more blatant. And yet! everything was good, oh, yes, very good—Sir Josiah had seen to that. He had purchased under the best advice, but of arrangement he knew nothing and—forgive the violent metaphor which occurred to Mrs. Dartry—she had not been a minute in the room when she whispered it to Synnott—"Beauty has disgorged here." Not so did she speak to the baronet, but, waiting only to make the formal introduction, she launched her boat gaily into the middle stream of his weaknesses and floated along under a full sail.

"You man of power!" she said. "Civilisation seems to have existed only to make you a drawing-room."

"Praise from you is praise indeed, Mrs. Dartry," he answered, and the self-satisfied, expansive smile showed that he meant it. "Ah, here comes Lady Hodgins."

A comely and graceful woman she was, with all her bloom upon her and that in her eye which said clearly to Mrs. Dartry, "I will meet you on my ground and not on yours." And it was the note of her modesty and her youth she emphasised in her welcoming speech. . . . "I have heard so much of your brilliancy, Mrs. Dartry."

Mrs. Dartry met the issue squarely with a laugh:

"Brilliancy is a poor substitute for beauty and charm, Lady Hodgins"; and she looked out of the corner of her eye to see Sir Josiah well pleased with praise of his possession. And she looked at Synnott, and Synnott's eyes

were on Lady Hodgins. That irked her —"sniffing the air," she thought, and she would have marshalled all the forces of wit and experience to overwhelm youth and simple loveliness, but she remembered that she was about quite other business and rattled her spirit into its scabbard of tact, a restraint she showed, I regret to say, but rarely when her own sex challenged her.

She measured her man carefully, and at lunch had him talking in his own kingdom, of his horses, his dogs (and on these he was interesting), of whatever he cared to talk on in his bluff and boastful way, happy to have so famous a listener. In such a glow, Synnott, well schooled, made an excellent impression on him; and Synnott, for his part, was enjoying Lady Hodgins hugely, while she, the subtle woman, hung on his rare speeches with an air of modest entrancement delectable to one who loved admiration. Mrs. Dartry saw it all, and if she felt she had made a blunder she gave no sign of lowering her colors.

When lunch was over, they went out into the garden, two and two, and the baronet still talking.

It was no easy task Mrs. Dartry had set herself, as she soon found, when, through a remark about the expected General Election, she drew him into talking of his political career.

"Ah!" said he. "If only you and I had been a team, we might have accomplished something in the House!"

"Yes?" she said with an arch query, encouraging him to go on and talk, because she was at a loss—her mission being to make him forget the House.

"They need more business in politics," he said. "But you can't persuade them of it."

"Strange," she answered, "that you should say that! I hardly ever think of you as a business man."

"You don't?"

"Oh, of course I know the marvelous things you've done and the thousands and thousands you employ and all that, but . . ."

"Well?"

"Well, it is rather difficult to say and I hardly know whether I ought to say it, but I've always felt something far more picturesque in you. . . . I think that's why you've been a failure in the House."

She had paused under an apple-tree to make patterns on the gravel with her parasol, and her eyes were on the ground for shame of their own daring. Chantecler wore suddenly a bedraggled air.

"Failure!" he repeated hoarsely.

She stuck to the word, looking up at him now with flushed courage, as one who in the cause of truth risks dear things, and went on:

"Yes, failure—I have watched it sadly. The House hates personality, and that you know you have. . . . Ah, if only women were in Parliament!"

She smiled at him, tempering the wind, and what could the gallant man do but smile back?

"You must admit it . . . we have an eye for personality. Without us there would be no heroes, for there would be no admiration."

A less confident man would have been more wary here, a less gallant one might have heard the siren's note.

"What would you have me do?" he asked.

"Vivid things, brilliant things. . . . You are not at home in that place of mean intrigue and pettifogging lawyers."

"The lawyers certainly have it their own way there now."

"Yes," she mused. "Democracy has called them in to write its will."

The pun was lost on him, but not her evocation of a brilliant future for the man of fifty-eight.

"But what . . . what," he went back to it, "would you have me do?"

"Ah!" she sighed wearily, and sat on a bench, motioning him to join her.

The man was aflame with he knew not what. He remembered the lilac-bush and the twilight in which she had left him. Was this the dawn? You will forgive him if he thought it was, since what can be more bewitching than

beauty in distress when the distress is for one's own dear sake?

"Why do you bother about politics anyhow?" she said. "You have health and wealth and . . . and a charming wife."

So much of her own tragedy, that brief, unhappy marriage, did she put in the words that the baronet sought her hand and found it.

"Violet," he said—"you mustn't mind my calling you that—you are unhappy?"

She looked up at him, and there were tears in her eyes.

"You must not ask me that."

"But I"—he grew more tender—"I am unhappy too!"

"But for a man there is always some refuge."

"And for a woman too," he was gallant enough to say, "in a man's love."

"You think it is what I need."

"I thought so that evening under the lilac-bush. I think so now."

"I have never been loved as I wanted to," she said simply, and the baronet under his broad, desirous hand found the delicate fingers twitching.

"I love you, Violet"—the words burst out as from the sprouting rock the pillar of water.

"Sir Josiah!" She was all dignity now, as she rose from the seat. The baronet furled his sails.

"Forgive me, I shouldn't have said it."

She kept him suppliant for a moment and then, holding out her hand frankly, let her eyes fall upon him with a soft warmth that set his heart galloping.

"No—you should not . . . and yet I am woman enough to be glad you did."

"I want nothing but to make you happy."

"If only that were true!"

"Try me."

"It is all or nothing—for me."

"Then let it be all."

"Even a scandal!" she smiled archly again.

"Even a scandal."

"Ah!" she said. "That is one of the big things you could do."

She alluded to Synnott.

"There," she said, "is one who prefers power to love."

"He doesn't love you?"

"He loves what I can do for him and I love what he can do. I have brought him up, you know, since before he left Oxford, and his laurels will be my own."

"He is going into Parliament?"

"If he can find a seat, and my hope will go with him. He is all for fame. He desires a seat more than . . . more than you desire . . ."

He met her eyes fairly and in a second she was in his arms and all the lissome loveliness of her pressed against his massive limbs. . . .

"No, no!" he mumbled passionately. "Not more than that! Great God, I'd give a hundred seats for you."

"Then give him one," she said, taking his ecstasy at the word.

"You do not love him?"

"How can you ask?"

"Violet!"

"Josiah!"

Let the hag Morality enter here and say her say—the woman was lying in deed and word; search, therefore, for the eternal niche where she shall expiate her horrid guilt. Do you say so, too? I am not here to quarrel with you, but to relate that, while she was thus fooling her potvaliant cavalier, there was before her eyes, like the sheen of a descending sword, the smile that she had seen traveling from her beloved's eyes into those of Lady Hodgins. She did not flinch, no, not even when returning to the house with Sir Josiah from the garden (after having agreed to a *tête-à-tête* supper in a certain discreet and admirable hostelry) she caught sight of Synnott and the roguish young woman dropping their hands incontinently. They might as well have dashed her heart to the ground, so disastrous to her mind was the gesture.

Irony would fain linger with that *parti carré* as it stood about to be broken up. But we must on with the tale, begging you only to note that the vulgar and hearty mood of the baronet,

however irksome, did not break the gay composure of Mrs. Dartry nor lessen the self-conscious air of the younger couple. The baronet must surely have seen that they were rushing together if his eyes had not been blinded by the god to all but the fragrant woman whose memory lingered in his nostrils long after she had taken her place in the automobile beside her beloved Synnott and in response to his enquiry (how quick the boy was on his main purpose, laying his heart aside!) given him this answer:

"*Ça marche, mon petit.* . . . You found Lady Hodgins interesting?"

He shrugged his shoulders.

"Pretty, and not without spice."

"The flavor is good, I hope, and not too bitter. . . . I'm going to drop you at the next corner, for I have much to do."

And when she dropped him she said to herself:

"He is dragging his anchor. Lord knows into what a storm he will drift!"

And over her face, keen with intrigue, there passed a wave of tenderness.

"At my age, too!" she said to herself, feeling it, "when the sword should be in the hand and not in the heart."

She had lived in such shallow waters that she was bewildered, finding herself in the deeps; but she was fearless.

"Life has treated me well," she said. "Let it exact the price."

III

It is not to be supposed that the succeeding days were without their hesitations for Mrs. Dartry, though of attention from Synnott she lacked nothing, for the boy was all impatience and the air was full of political rumors. Obscure members of parliament suddenly found themselves thrust into headlines with a forecast of the Government's resignation and its plans for an election.

"If I am to have the seat, I should be down there now," Synnott would say. "If the election is rushed I shan't have time to tour the constituency."

"Sir Josiah will see to that . . . it is as safe as ever was a pocket borough."

"But are you certain he will yield to me?"

"He will not yield easily . . . but he *will* yield."

She knew he would yield if he were paid his price, and her wits were at work to make him yield without her paying it. But he came of too shrewd a stock not to know the value of his merchandise, and though the fatuous man was convinced of her love his mind was on the mutability of women.

It was not, as you have guessed, difficult for the bird of paradise to keep the barnyard chantecler strutting after her, but you will see how incongruous it was. Once when they had been supping at the Savoy and he was taking her home in his limousine, they came suddenly into an obscure street and he seized her and covered her face with kisses—he could have held her in one hand above his head! She gave him kiss for kiss as if she loved the riot, but when she left him on the doorstep she rushed upstairs and, tearing her clothes from her, plunged into a bath with a blind instinct for purification.

He was repentant the next day. Roses—and how she loved them!—piled high on her bed before she got up, told that. And for two days she allowed him to stay away, but . . . the days were precious for her main emprise, and then she sent for him. Of all that, she allowed Synnott to know nothing, making the boy believe it was the gayest of adventures—"Catching a whale with a spool of silken thread," she called it, and the boy did not doubt the thread would hold. For he himself, already paying shameless, insistent and welcome court to Lady Hodgins, found his passion always at Mrs. Dartry's mercy when she was near. How, then, could the baronet resist her fascination? How much Mrs. Dartry knew of his double-dealing at this time I cannot tell, but she felt it all; and yet, when she was in his arms, she found the moment sweet, since it was never in her power

to scrutinise the credentials of joy.

In ten days she had brought the baronet to a point where he promised to visit his constituency, taking Synnott with him.

"It will blood the boy," she said, and added, "I think you will find he has a good nose for his quarry."

And indeed he had. Day by day the letters came from the baronet . . . audiences were enthusiastic . . . local papers spoke of the boy as "the rising hope of Liberalism" . . . "a brand snatched from the burning . . ." "a proof that even in the worst circles of Toryism the sacred fires of freedom could be kindled" . . . and so on.

Sweet music to her ears those words were, you may believe, but the baronet did not speak of retirement.

The boy himself wrote too, impatiently and arrogantly, "I could poll more votes than the old cock himself," he said, and that letter made her write him, counselling prudence. "Youth must have vision," she said, "and silence to succeed; you have vision, my dear boy." She was afraid that strange temperament of his, so susceptible to vanity, might find a fit of shallow impetuosity wiping out all its fundamental mensuration had gained. He replied, assuring her that he would be cautious, and he was so completely so that the baronet was more than ever taken with him, more especially as the keen boy made him feel that the qualities of manhood his protectress most admired were those qualities for which Sir Josiah held himself conspicuous.

The tour, so far as Sir Josiah was concerned, had been a model of tact. He had spoken much of his increasing business interests, of his desire for more leisure and, withal, of his undying devotion to the principles of Liberalism. The local committee passed unanimous resolutions thanking him for past services and hoping he would continue, etc., etc. He gave them no pledges and they valued him all the more for that.

Synnott learned much from the native shrewdness of the man in those days. The baronet included the boy in his audience, supposing him to know no more than that there was a possibility of his retirement and that if he made good on the tour the seat might be his . . . if Sir Josiah did retire. To Synnott that "if" became larger day by day as he watched the vanity of the man, and when they returned to London he went in gloom to Violet Dartry.

"He will never retire," he said.

She was going to a dinner at an ambassador's when he called, dusty and grimy from the long automobile trip, and she dismissed him curtly after an embrace,

"Come to tea tomorrow—no, the day after," she said. "I will have something to tell you."

He went off sullenly enough, and she to her dinner. The next day Sir Josiah called and met her radiant.

"How splendid you are!" she said. "The boy rushed to me the moment he came back and said you had your people like hounds on a leash."

"I am always better on a platform than in the House," he answered.

"Because you are more human. . . . Oh, if only they would write statutes in the red blood of humanity instead of in lawyers' ink!"

It was the note which always took with the baronet.

"By God," he said, "I could make them write such statutes if you were behind me."

"Alas! if I were behind you, you would have no place in the House."

"Why not?"

"Think of Parnell . . . think of Dilke, the fascinating man whom a scandal turned into a guide-book of foreign affairs. . . . No, Josiah, you cannot have me and politics."

"Then to the devil with politics . . . you can have that seat when you wish."

"If I pay the price?" she smiled, coming nearer to him and touching his chin with her forefinger until he had drunk in the perfume of her hair. His arms went out to take her, but she eluded them.

"One shouldn't make love before

noon," she said. "It makes the day too long. . . . Take me to the park."

For an hour they drove in the park, and when he left her she had agreed to sup with him that night. She did not tell him that at dinner the evening before she had learned that the Cabinet would meet in the afternoon and in all probability decide to resign.

"Oh," she said, when they were about to part, "if only you and I had met four years ago, how different it would all be! . . . But a scandal—a scandal is unthinkable. No, not even for my boy's sake can I think of it."

"Are you afraid? I am not."

"When a woman is forty, she lives with ghosts."

"What ghosts?"

"The ghosts of her beauty, her fascination, her power . . . she has no substance to fall back upon. As well the grave as a scandal."

"But our love will last forever."

"Lady Hodgins?"

He shook his head.

"No flavor."

She laughed, remembering that Synnott had found her ladyship not without spice.

"You and I cannot taste spring water."

"You are the wine of my life," he assured her.

"Then, perhaps . . . oh, perhaps . . ."

"Promise me!"

"You know where my heart is!" she answered as they parted.

What a radiant mood he was left to conjure with until the papers flashed the news that Mr. Balfour had been to see the King and had tendered his resignation. All London was agog with excitement, but to the baronet how foolish seemed their emotions! "You know where my heart is."

Of course he did, and with so gallant a charge in his keeping, how empty were the shibboleths of this party and that, how little in the sum of life counted the fickle plaudits of the crowd when, for the mere bravery of standing alone, he could have his heart's desire! Let her but put the key in his hand, he thought, to that treasure-house of bliss and he would gladly turn his back on the tumult of make-believe which is called public life. "Though if we were discreet," he said, "we might manage both."

But on that, as he remembered, she had been adamant—"all or nothing," she had said. The rhetoric of the phrase overwhelmed him and in an ecstasy of sacrifice, quickened by his keen physical delight in her, he began to fashion for himself a picturesque niche with Lasalle and others (of whom she had often spoken), that brilliant band who had consigned their careers into the purple flame.

IV

PUNCTUALLY at eleven o'clock that night, Mrs. Dartry arrived at the Savoy, a thing of soft tones and easy flowing movement, the blood warm under her skin, a creature of poise and glow who floated along as lightly as a bubble in the sunlight. She dismissed her chauffeur, telling him he would not be needed again that night, and in a minute the ruddy baronet was at her side strutting like a peacock in pride of his conquest.

"So good of you to be in time!" he said.

She looked up at him, letting the shadow of a reproach linger about her eyes.

"How could I be late?" And he had the assurance of her hand as it cuddled for a minute inside his.

Discreet and careful were the preparations he had made. He had himself chosen their supper-room overlooking the Thames as it flowed magnificently through the silver dusk, and the wine, for in palate he need yield to no man; a simple dish or two there were of her choosing, for she knew the value of temperance, though he was all for a gorge, so radiant was he with that "You know where my heart is"; and he could not dissociate feasting from joy.

Mrs. Dartry saw to it that the revel ended at midnight, pleading a multi-

tude of engagements the next day whereat she would be in the middle of the political whirlpool and need her clearest wits to keep her sails above water.

There had been one or two perilous moments in the brief hour, when the primitive man seized her as if there and then the delicately-moulded body must be his; but she had managed to escape and in escaping to heighten his desire, making his eyes grow craftily amorous like a satyr's suddenly come upon a nymph-beheavened greening.

For she had made her pact with him; and when at the door her shrinking lips suddenly blossomed out again to return his last kiss, he knew that in a few days (the altar properly set for the sacrifice, since she had demanded a ritual of beauty!), he would possess her.

Like herself he had been discreet enough to dismiss his chauffeur and they came to stand in the courtyard, slightly in the shadow, waiting for a taxicab. His eyes were all for her and her eyes were on the wheeling vehicles with their precious freight. Suddenly as the taxi drove up she lost her poise and with a swift—"Oh!"—grabbed his arm.

At the spur he was all anxious concern, but she looked straight up at him and laughed lightly. . . .

"Nothing at all . . . a twinge of rheumatism."

He wrapped her cloak more tightly around her and handed her into the taxi, and she drove off alone (she had stipulated for this), and ere the cab was in the Strand her hands fell lifeless to her lap like wounded sea-gulls and a stricken look withered her eyes. Why, oh, why, need Destiny have chosen this moment to send Lady Hodgins sailing by on the arm of Synnott, the two young people all for one another and the sly woman's pennant floating gaily at the fore?

It was the most dismal night Violet Dartry had ever spent, a fell night peopled with despairs, regrets and mocking remembrances of the sunny hours when she had never given failure a thought, when she had sailed along in light airs with every stitch of canvas spread and the world pausing in admiration of her grace and her skill at her heart's helm. Here she was now! —rudderless and every shred of canvas in tatters around the groaning mast.

Yet the dawn came, as come it must, and with it came new purpose, new courage, new energy; new hope, too, as she remembered many a joyous hour in Synnott's presence. Surely she need not fear this simple rivalry, and if she must, if she must even acknowledge to herself its victory, she would never acknowledge it to the world!

A great longing to see Synnott came over her and before the morning was old she sent for him. With deft hands she repaired the night's ravages, but the mirror lied, her heart said. Yet he was not a minute in the room before she was bitter that this brought no unquietness into his eyes. He kissed her and told her how well she was looking, and the words were daggers. Not that she showed it; on the contrary she fell in with his eager mood as he questioned her on the baronet's resignation—

"He *will* resign," she said. "I have his promise."

"The world is at your feet . . . you have persuaded him."

"Yes, I have . . . persuaded him."

For a moment her wings seemed to droop, weary of flight, and only the utter indifference of the boy to all but his own emprise kept her in the air.

"He will recommend me?"

"Yes."

"When will he write?"

"He will write from Paris on Saturday."

He could not now but feel the muffled tremor in her voice; she had drawn away from him and was standing so that he could see only her profile.

"You don't mean. . . ."

"It is his price."

"You must not do this for me."

She turned around and faced him fully, and something of the old dancing light came into her eyes.

"Sacrifice has all the fascination of a

new sin for me but I intend to resist it," she said. "He believes he will get his price. He leaves for Paris tonight —I leave tomorrow morning; and tomorrow night Mr. and Mrs. Zach Simmonds (isn't that a lovely name?) of Boston, Mass., will be at the Grand Hotel. From there the baronet's resignation will be mailed—you see?"

"But I don't see how. . . ."

"Ah, but you will . . . I go Folkestone-Boulogne; you will go in the morning, too, but by Dover-Calais; and precisely at midnight tomorrow night you will knock at the suite of Mr. and Mrs. Zach Simmonds."

Synnott burst out laughing—"Upon my soul, it is an ingenious plan—poor Falstaff!"

"You will not be late," she cautioned him with a smile so playful that he thought only of teasing her. . . .

"If I were?"

She shivered. "You must not be."

"Great heavens, Vi," he cried, and his arms swept around her like waves around a rock, so motionless she was. "You cannot think I would let you run the least risk."

Her tired head leaned on him for a moment, and when she looked up there were tears in her eyes.

"You are like the sea—just as tender, just as savage, just as implacable, just as undependable, and you will devour those who love you best if it suits your purpose."

All for his career, the words flattered him more than they irked him, as she knew they would. Youth like his, she thought to herself, clings to its vision of devastating advance, crushing roses and rocks alike under the heel of its dream, and despising only what cringes before it. In Violet Dartry's mind, wild torrents of words surged and resurged; and upon them, the object of her wrath, that other woman's ship with its arrogant sails. But of it all she let her boy hear no rumble . . . for it is not the way of youth to love a whining woman!

Her silence when, separating herself from him, she sat a little apart, he attributed to her physical fear of the infatuated baronet and argued with her not to be afraid, that he would be on the minute, the very second; how could he be late since she was his whole heart's content? "Maybe he believes that," she thought momentarily, but her hope went fluttering into shadow when she saw the hawk rise again as he asked for details of her plan.

"The letter will be despatched, or in the hotel safe with my jewels before . . . before you come," she assured him; and then, because she felt her being strain under the storm of which he knew nothing, she dismissed him. . . .

"Until tomorrow night then."

And so he left her after a last embrace in which she clung to him as passionately as ever. And when he had gone, she said to herself—

"After all, he is young . . . these things must happen . . . but he will come back to me."

And with that thought there came the rest the night had denied her; for two sunlit hours she slept.

She had not been long awake when the baronet telephoned her, all anxiety; "A little tired," she told him, that was all; he had been fearing for her health. He wanted to see her, too, so impatient he was, but she pleaded that she had not a moment before his train went.

"You will come," he made his last appeal.

"How could I fail?" she answered him, and when she turned away from the telephone she was all intrigue again. Of all her escapades this was the most daring; no time then for aught but to perfect her armor and her strategy. The daring buccaneer—and, Lord, how embannered the strutting fellow was!—must never suspect the frail barque he was for capturing until her hidden guns had given him their full broadside.

There were preparations to make, best left to her maid who from long service was accustomed to sudden journeys in which she took no part. There was, too, a short and rather amusing

interview with Balscombe to tide over the anxious afternoon, Balscombe reckoned to have a fine chance for a minor office should the Tories return to power but a little skeptical now whether they would, a bloodless fellow who had once done her a favor and who was now running like a rattled dog between Free Trade and Protection. Which did she think the country would go for, he wanted to know?

"Every Briton dearly loves his loaf," she answered him.

"But. . . ."

"No, no, no, Balscombe," she laughed. "Don't argue. . . . I know nothing of economics. Neither do the people; that's why Free Trade will win."

"You think we'll be beaten."

She nodded, and he went away more perplexed than ever; but the incident amused her and she wondered if Balscombe would really declare for Free Trade on her advice.

When in the years succeeding her downfall, Gossip with a glib and truthless tongue took to recounting her story, it often dwelt on another interview which had taken place that same day. That version told how Lady Hodgins, suspecting her baronet's intrigue, had called on Mrs. Dartry and in the ensuing combat left the bird of paradise with wings so crippled that she, in her pain and wrath, hobbled straight into the baronet's arms for very spite. But that is a vulgar and baseless tale. The intrigues of the baronet little concerned his wife, the careful woman who had secured a handsome pre-nuptial settlement before she committed, as the phrase goes, her heart to his keeping.

A woman you must admire, too, this daughter of an impoverished squire for knowing so well what she wanted and how to get it, even if you dislike the Anglo-Saxon bluntness with which she paid the price, for she had surrendered without any of that romantic persiflage so dear to the Latin or the Celt. And it was the same hankering for reality which brought her to Violet Dartry's. She wanted, as she would say herself, to take her bearings; to find whether the new light which had appeared on her horizon was a fortunate star or only the wrecker's fire luring her to inclement rocks. A foolish quest she was on, indeed, even though Mrs. Dartry was not at her best that afternoon. She went and came, still wondering whether nature had really mated the hawk and the bird of paradise. Of the baronet she said only this—

"Sir Josiah has some notion of retiring. I wish he would, and leave the horrid Radicals."

"I have always hoped he would join us," said Mrs. Dartry. "We need business men."

And there the talk of the baronet dropped, but the talk of politics continued, all Lady Hodgins' lines out and on every line a bait, but beyond a capricious nibble now and then to set her ladyship's nerves a-tingle, Mrs. Dartry did no more than swim easily between the hooks, disdaining even to flick them with her confident tail.

"So her ladyship is not certain of the boy," she said to herself when her ladyship had gone—"and wonders how hard I want to fight for him."

There then is the truth which Gossip never guessed, but had the malignant shrew been more subtle she might have fastened her teeth on the pathetic confidence which my undaunted heroine felt after Lady Hodgins had gone, a confidence destined to find itself so tragically mistaken, as you know, though until I have unfolded the whole tale, you will not know how heroic the mistake was. That Violet Dartry with the world as her open book should have had confidence at all in one so swift to pounce upon fame, you must find strange, as indeed I should if I did not remember her own maxim that the heart and will travel best in tandem harness with the heart for leader. I am not here to defend her theory but to recount her tale.

V

STILL the white cliffs of Old England ("The whited sepulchre" as Violet

Dartry came to call it) showed above a smooth, untroubled sea when the packet carrying Mrs. Dartry and her fortunes passed in beyond old welcoming Grey-Nose and clipped her way into the busy harbor of Boulogne, with all its fisher-boats and quaint fisher-folk, its arrogant Emperor's Column, its climbing, winding streets, its ramparts, its wooded shrine, its hustle and bustle and chatter, all French and all friendly to one who loved so well the race that knows so well the art of life.

The customs' man knew her . . . how could he forget her smile! . . . and soon she was rolling along the road to Paris; to civilisation, as she would herself have said, had not melancholy like a gaunt grey crow spread its wings between her and the sun.

"A perfect day for a Greek tragedy" —was the thought uppermost in her mind, and she smiled at the subconscious egoism of relating her little drama of intrigue to the thunderous stress of those antique conflicts.

In the carriage with her were three Americans, father, mother and daughter, simple middle-western folk, cheery, restless and eager for their adventure. The daughter was the source of knowledge chattering ceaselessly that romantic gossip which clings to the name of Paris like perfume to a veiled woman in the dusk.

Mrs. Dartry listened for a while, loving the girl for her zest in life, and then wearied of it. Yet she could not analyze her own melancholy. Synnott! —you will say; but she carried with her a note received from him that morning when she awoke, and surely it was a lover's assurance! She must not worry; he would be there: his career would be her triumph; his heart would be her footstool.

She read it again and yet again; did she think he was protesting too much? Somehow the doubt had fastened itself on her that if he loved her he would not let her risk this: but she said frankly to herself that one capable of entering upon the affair that occupied her should not be sensitive if the ambitious boy had forgotten the woman in the conspirator.

But that was not all. What was it, then? Was it Lady Hodgins? But no, she told herself, Lady Hodgins was but an incident—the boy would come back to her. The truth is that her ghosts, the ghosts, as she called them, that hover around the woman of forty, were plaguing her. She did not feel the old confidence in herself, and confidence to a woman like Violet Dartry is the wind in her sails. But one thing could atone for it and that—the actual stress of battle when the clear task before her would allow of no hesitations and doubts. Mercifully the hour of combat came at last when she stepped upon the platform of the Gare du Nord and found the baronet, with expansive arms, awaiting her. Her nature told her that in victory here lay her one chance for a swift reconquest of Synnott, and to victory then she bent herself so well that the baronet found her, as he thought, a radiant and sympathetic prize.

When they reached the hotel, she pleaded that being without a maid she must be given plenty of time to dress for dinner. Be sure she did not hurry. When at last the baronet saw her he was well-rewarded, for there was not a trick of the toilet she had not turned to keep him very sure that the world of his petty ambition would be well-lost for her.

Paris was always to Mrs. Dartry like an exfoliation of her own spirit at its gayest, wittiest, bravest; and she was too much the creature of her hour to let her melancholy endure when she found herself back in the swim of that amazingly fluid life. Where for dinner, the baronet asked, and where to be amused? She chose a restaurant which surprised him, a quiet place of which he had never heard—"George Moore goes there," she said, "for its roast chicken."

"The fellow who writes novels?"

"The very same; he knows women and horses and food, and what else is there to know?" she answered so co-

quettishly that the baronet took the compliment to himself.

And so they went to their simple dinner, and the baronet could have fumed and fretted, for the wine was execrable and he would have made the evening a riot of emotion. For him, indeed, though how sacriligious is the application, "exuberance was beauty"; but you will not blame Mrs. Dartry if she feared his exuberance; so she kept him temperate; until fearing at last that, her mission being to keep him in an ecstasy of sacrifice, she might deny his appetite too far, she consented to a supper of oysters and champagne in their suite after the theatre. I say she consented, but so carefully had she planned the evening, this quarter of an hour and that to last safely up till Synnott's thundering at the door, that it may have been she who suggested that solace to her baronet's desires. In something of the same spirit she had him take her to the Folies Bergeres—

"For the Lord's sake, nothing morbid to-night, Violet," he had said; and nearly all French plays were morbid to him who knew the language so poorly that their wit passed him by like a flock of twittering sparrows. Really he could do no better at the famous music-hall; but there at least the language of gesture would be more cosmopolitan. And indeed the place amused him; and it was Violet Dartry and not he who suggested at eleven o'clock that they should leave it—

"And go home?" he asked in surprise.

"And go home?" she answered.

To her what mattered was that before twelve she must have his letter resigning and recommending Synnott, and it must be safe in the mail or in the hotel's vaults. They called a taxicab and swung on their perilous way homeward with a disregard for speed laws fostered by the baronet's promise of a handsome *pourboire*.

And thus to their suite in that hotel which, though its *clientèle* be not of those whom you and I (a little overcivilised, it may be) would choose for our companions, yet possesses an excellent cuisine and excellent service, so that the baronet and his lady had not long to wait before, with every circumstance of elegance, their repast was served.

Mrs. Dartry was still in her own room when the baronet came to tell her that all was ready and the servant dismissed. She had taken off her evening gown and was now in a peignoir so dainty that from toe to head you might have matched her against any precious piece of silver filigree you know. Gold she was not—lacking just then the warm glow of the heart, but silver she was with the clear cold sheen of the moon that is mistress of the intellect. And it was as all mind she shone when, curving rhythmically past the expectant arms of the baronet, she swam through her own clouds into the room and stood where the light might tell its best tale, awaiting him.

The sight of his table spread made him take in merry mood that playful evasion, more merrily even because of the gallant trick he had himself imagined, for scarcely, with a flitting kiss, had she seated herself when he said—"Let me have your plate"—and lifting it to give it to him she caught sight of two envelopes under it.

No slower than the white gannet swoops down from northern airs, the sunlight flecking its wings, upon the sleeping fish beneath the waves, she was upon them; and while she read, her eyes danced in mad, riotous fellowship with the sparkle of the rare old wine her abundant companion was pouring into her glass. Share with me that fellowship, for this is what she read—

My dear Higgenbotham,

It is with the deepest regret that I am compelled to write you this letter which has for its object the severance of relations that have been very dear to me. The fact is, however, that increasing business interests make it impossible for me to give to public affairs that time and attention which these strenuous days demand. You will have been somewhat prepared for my decision by

my speeches on my recent tour, and I only beg you to realise that my decision is irrevocable. I feel less guilty in deserting you upon the eve of battle since I can recommend to the Committee one who is destined to carry the grand old flag of Liberalism far beyond where I might have placed it. I need scarcely mention the name of Mr. Ralph Synnott, for you and the Committee will readily recall the excellent impression he made on the constituency recently. His career at Oxford is well known to you and I am certain that if your Committee will give him the nomination, the electors of Mudshire will, by an overwhelming majority, set the seal of their approval upon that fine old spirit of sturdy English independence which has made him break away from his traditions and take his place in the vanguard of progress with the mass of our people upon whom Providence has placed the burden of a far-flung empire. Be assured that whatever debt the Committee considers itself under to me (and I would not mention it but that in many resolutions you have spoken of it) will be best discharged by choosing as my successor this brilliant and capable young man whom it has been my privilege to introduce to you. My heart will be with you in the campaign, and as a slight measure of the interest which I take in it, I enclose you herewith a cheque for £1,000 (one thousand pounds) towards the expenses of the fight.

Yours in the good old cause,

Josiah Hodgins.

And to Synnott there was this—

My dear Synnott,

Increasing business interests compelling me to retire from the representation of Mudshire, I have taken the liberty of recommending your name to the Committee. I have told them—what I have concluded from my association with you recently on the platform and off—that I believe you are destined for a magnificent career. I need not say that if this promise is justified, I shall regard the day of my resignation as the happiest of my life.

Yours very sincerely,

Josiah Hodgins.

With Synnott's career thus in her keeping, and her conviction that in realising her power the boy would return to her, you might have forgiven her an outburst of joy—but that was not Violet Dartry's way; she had no intention of laying bare her heart to the baronet, less because the letters were not yet safely under lock and key than that she resented the stupid man's knowing how deeply love had bitten into her heart. Her plan, you must know, was that Synnott would come as boy to mother, and plead with her not to court disaster, and then with tears in her eyes she would rake the baronet's heart for the sentimentality that lies latent in every *bon viveur* and plead with him, professing her love all the time, for a delay to end the horrid scene of argument—and meanwhile the letters would be in the mail.

So she rose with tears in her eyes and put her arms around Sir Josiah and told him of his noble sacrifice and that on the scroll of great lovers his name must be emblazoned. Then she slipped from him to her own room, telling him that she would return anon. But when she had reached the room she sent for the manager and gave him her jewelcase and the letters to be mailed at once by his own trusted hand. Then letting down her hair she prepared for the final scene, sitting on the side of the bed and her heart all agog for the coming of her beloved Synnott. In a few minutes she heard the baronet walking in the sitting room, and as the clock struck twelve, she went out to him.

There was a step outside the door—now was the moment of deliverance; a knock and the baronet stepped back wrathfully. But she nodded, and he said gruffly—"come in"—at a loss because he had told the waiter the things could stay until morning.

And it was not the waiter. In the

doorway, her face framed in thunder, stood our sly and silent Lady Hodgins; behind her—she left nothing to chance—a brother to confirm the welcome testimony of her eyes!

Gossip has never done justice to the scene which followed, for Gossip had a story of haggling women and men at all but handigrips. Yet quite otherwise was the case; for I have but poorly shown you my Violet Dartry if you can believe that a wit so well whetted on the grindstone of the world could have deserted her now when all but all seemed lost. While the baronet stood like a foaming wave frozen at its climax, and his legal lady posed already for the witness-box, Mrs. Dartry found the word she wanted—

"Will your ladyship not join us?"

Her ladyship did not join them, but with a handkerchief at her eyes—the foreseeing woman—gave her arm to her brother and walked away. The baronet strutted to the door and shut it with a bang, while Mrs. Dartry sank into a chair and reached for the cigarettes—

"My dear Josiah," she said to the bewildered man, "this is a nice kettle of fish; better order another bottle of Pommery and let's talk it over."

The wine would occupy him, she thought, and for herself she would be glad of its succor. It was not that she dreaded Lady Hodgins and her arrows so much as that she had gone ashen at the dismal truth she had divined when, looking for Synnott, she had seen the lady at the door.

Most bitter of moments!—when all that she had ever done, all that she had ever said, seemed, by one stroke of contemptible fate, to become no more than the strutting and mouthing of a vociferous pantaloon amusing a come-day go-day crowd and soon to be forgotten. The utter meanness of Synnott's betrayal of her dumbfounded her, and its daring left her like a tree charred and stark after a lightning stroke, its blossoms in ashes and its sap dried up.

Yet she had managed to keep her flag flying while her ladyship stood there challenging it, and when her ladyship was gone, the sight of the baronet, dejected and helpless, kept her on her mettle. If the man but knew the trick she had meant to play him; if he knew the trick that had been played herself! "Detectives—detectives—a low scurvy trick!" was all Sir Josiah could say, and she did not enlighten him. She sat silent, revolving her problems until the wine came and a passing doubt had swooned through her mind that perhaps she was judging wrongly, that maybe Synnott had not betrayed her, that he might arrive presently.

But that hope, scarcely ever more than half-alive, died quickly. Her instinct and her knowledge of the boy hammered their way through her heart's defences straight to her brain. She had schooled him too well; and by a master-stroke he had thought to secure all she could give him and secure as well his Lady Hodgins; for the boy, as she well knew, needed money and her ladyship possessed it. But how did he imagine his trick would obtain for him the nomination?

Her mind was not working freely, for above this problem hovered the immediate one of what she was to do with the baronet. That, she could not solve in the room with him and that she must solve.

And so when the wine came she drank to make her wits more nimble and assumed a gay, bantering air which soon had him in a mood defiant of fate; and when she had him so, she persuaded him that best of all things it would be to fling themselves out again on the mad stream of Paris and enjoy the whirl and delight of its flow. And so they went from this place to that, he seeking and finding amusement in the crowd for whom the hour's purpose was everything, she debating and revolving within herself what course she must, for the blackened future, pursue. Lady Hodgins without a doubt would secure a divorce, and without a doubt the baronet could not win a noncomformist constituency with the shadow of a divorce over him.

And through all the tumult of her mind, one idea kept returning and returning. Long afterward she confessed that the notion of revenge on Synnott had tempted her many times that night but, as she would say—"What was the use? I loved him. It would have been vulgar." And so it was that when the divorce came (I had almost forgotten to tell you that the day after the discovery Lady Hodgins promised to keep Mrs. Dartry's name out of the proceedings in return for the nomination, but finding that the baronet's letters had already gone, revoked her promise) and all England was ringing with calumny of Mrs. Dartry she kept silent and to this day few have learnt how utter her failure had been.

As she went with the baronet back to the hotel that morning her mind was made up. The letters could have been countermanded by a wire if she would but say the word, for Sir Josiah was in fighting mood. And to save them she slipped later into his arms and there remained until her Synnott's career was launched.

She made no defence at the trial, nor spoke when, the statutory time elapsed, Synnott, now a member of the House, married Lady Hodgins. But when she died she had certain papers—Synnott's passionate letters—buried with her; "I shall need wings in Heaven," she said with a smile as she gave that order.

Without a doubt, had she published them the world would at least have learned that Violet Dartry had a heart and perhaps forgiven her, as it never has done, for possessing a mind.

VI

So runs the main story; all else save the details of her escape from the baronet you can get from the newspapers of the time, and on those details, lacking the picturesque, I shall not touch. But there was one incident which the newspapers strangely missed, and concerning which Gossip invented an ugly tale telling how Mrs. Dartry, reckless and abandoned, took with her to France when she fled another infatuated boy and there dropped him too.

The truth is otherwise, and by way of epilogue I shall tell it since it is characteristic of one who found life so vivid that she said—"Eternity is but an epilogue." There were friends of hers who never deserted her; and these, a chosen few, she gathered together, in surprised array, one spring dawn upon a stretch of glorious sward near Hendon. They found her already seated in an aeroplane beside her Poet, as she called him (that boy who wrote so little and lived so lyrically and died so gallantly on the Somme last autumn). And when all were assembled, she said—"I am flying to France." And she was so gay that spring morning that as she rose into the air those men who had loved her sent the last songs of their youth winging after her.

Beating ever southward the great bird that carried her passed over the ultimate ridge of England, over the Channel, a grey and choppy stream that morning, on to Paris, where it rested, but not for long. In a few hours it was off again, and not until the blue waters of the Middle Sea came into view did it descend.

There was a cottage ready for her in Nice; and there her Poet would fain have remained with her . . . for he loved her. But her heart was under Synnott's heel, and the chivalrous boy did not press his suit. Yet it was not without wistfulness she saw him mount again into his seat and heard the burr of the engines and watched him disappear northward toward the land where cold mists and biting winds send the soul snivelling for shelter behind futile pulpits . . . where those who have condemned Violet Dartry tread upon the mill of virtue and never mount a glorious step heavenward. In the south with her soul and her silence and the memory of many a *felix culpa* (those happy sins that by a certain blessed pathway lead to regeneration), Violet Dartry remained.

CONFESSIONS OF A BRIDEGROOM

By Hinson Stiles

I AM no masculine Mary MacLane, yet now, in a sane mood six months after my marriage, I must record my impressions of a few fallacies that have hitherto existed to the detriment of the Holy Estate.

I

MARRIAGE kills a man's imagination and sharpens a woman's. Husbands, then, are shocked at the easy prey they are to other men's wives.

II

I AM convinced that becoming a bridegroom is something a gentleman submits to only after every other agency of persuasion has failed.

III

I HAVE a good bride, as brides go. I know this better than anyone else in the world, yet I have been married but once.

IV

WHEN my wife divorces me (we are a cultured couple and intend to live intelligently), I shall marry again. I am too humanly, flabbily, foolishly sentimental to deny myself this amusement.

V

I TAKE a wonderful delight in kissing my bride. Her kiss is like the warm wet kiss of a delightful young débutante I met two weeks ago at her coming-out reception.

VI

I FIND, now that I am married, that women who had previously found me uninteresting woo me into innocent but compromising situations for the pleasure of annoying my wife.

VII

A BRIDEGROOM is a person who was formerly a gentleman.

VIII

WHEN a young husband sees his wife submitting to the kisses of another man, it drives the hot blood of madness to his head. It makes him mad to think that he hadn't started sooner himself.

IX

I WLIL get married again if the affair my wife is conducting with a toothsome young blade is sufficiently serious to warrant her asking me for the divorce. I will get married over again for the same reason that I like the kisses of other women. I am used to it.

X

THE length of time a man fights against becoming a bridegroom is nearly equal to the length of time he remains one.

XI

IT is fortunate that no bride ever measures up to the standard set up in the bridegroom's imagination. It en-

ables him to search for the missing qualities in other women with moral impunity.

XII

THE reason that I, as a bridegroom, am suspicious of all my male friends is because I was once a friend of a bridegroom.

XIII

I LOVE my bride. She loves me. That's why our marriage is a monotonous affair, to be classed in the same genus with boudoir farces and girls who sigh when you kiss them.

XIV

I HAVE come to realize that the love of a beautiful bride is the most fragile, tempting, unholy and wonderful experience in a husband's life, particularly if she isn't his own.

* * *

Mary MacLane, had I your exquisite ability to create delightful images, I could tell a lot of things about marriage that my man's soul refuses to set forth. After all, I am just a garden-variety of bridegroom. There are thousands, millions like me. I am eternal. That's the hell of it!

THROUGH THE CALL OF CLOSER DAYS

By Virginia Woodward Cloud

HERE, though I walk in alien ways,
While other twilights wane,
I know the hyacinthine Mays,
The perfumed, starry rain,—
And, through the call of closer days I hear those pipes again!

The secret of the soul is this;—
Never detached it goes,
From that far, fusing fire of bliss
Whence flamed its reddest rose;
It wanders back where Hellas is and the old enchantment knows.

Where red and gold the swift sands ran,
Thou, spirit, linked with mine,
In the dim gardens where began
This ether's potent wine,—
Have I not yielded one short span the passion that was thine?

THEY CALL IT LOVE

By Edgar Jepson

GREY gazed out of the window with thoughtful eyes; he was not even frowning. In fact, his quiet face displayed nothing but a gentle weariness. But had she been truly alert and sympathetic, a little less engrossed in herself, Doris might have perceived that he was regarding the symmetrical front of the block of flats opposite with an earnestness the prospect did not deserve.

"I *shall* go," she said, half challenging, half stubborn.

"I know you will," he said quietly.

"And why shouldn't I dine at the Mornington and go to the Palace with Grierson?" she cried. "Why shouldn't I have a little amusement?"

"There is only one reason," he said; and he turned and looked at her stubborn face. "It isn't quite fair to me."

"It is! It is! You go about with that other woman. Why shouldn't I go about with Grierson?"

"No, I don't. I've never been alone with her once since I told you I wouldn't," he said quietly.

"You saw her on Wednesday week!" she cried.

"In a crowded teashop—for an hour—what was it? I can't be an utter brute—though you make me want to."

"She made love to you."

"No one *can* make love to me except you, dear angel. It can't be done—really it can't. With other women I'm just a block—a bored, insensate, pulseless block."

As he spoke the set line of his face softened; his eyes softened; they rested on her face in a gaze of pure adoration.

She softened to it, quivering for a breath with the heady sense of power and possession. He did love her; and she loved him. Then she hardened again in the desire to exercise her power, to hurt him. She would hurt him; she must; she loved him so.

"And I'm not to go out with Grierson, when you go out with her?" she said coldly.

"It's so different," he said; and his face set slowly into its weariness. "It's detestable—utterly. If his large hands weren't covered with untanned alligator skin—"

"They aren't! Most women would prefer him to you—much!" she said quickly, angrily.

"I have no use for most women," he said contemptuously.

"Oh, your conceit—your boundless conceit!" she cried.

"His hands are absolutely formless—wrinkled, drabbish lumps. They should never touch you; they should never have touched you—never! The pictures they give me!" he said and shuddered ever so little.

She quivered to the emotion under his level tones; the pain in his eyes hurt her.

"But he isn't going to touch me. Of course he isn't," she said gently. Then, in a fresh access of cruelty, she added: "He'll only kiss me once or twice in the taxi—perhaps."

His lips twisted queerly.

A sudden vision of the bright restaurant, the women's dresses, the music, the champagne rose before her mind.

"It's absurd," she said fretfully. "You know I haven't been out in the evening for a fortnight. You haven't taken me. You know how I love it."

Her keen, almost greedy, discontent robbed her face of charm, made it common.

"I know," he said; and there was just the faintest note of contempt in his tone.

Then he added softly: "This cursed money!"

The discontent in her face deepened.

"I've got it!" he said quickly in a tone of lively relief. "My ivory Kwanyin. Anstruther has always wanted her. He'll give me thirty pounds for her like a shot. I shall be able to take you out every night for a week."

His face had softened again to smiling adoration.

"No!" she cried. "I won't have it! I won't hear of it! You're fonder of that figure than anything you've ever had. I won't go out with you tonight —I won't."

Warm with the unselfish resolve, her face was almost fine.

His face fell. There was nothing to be done.

"But you'll go out with Grierson?" he said.

She hesitated, looking at him earnestly. Then the desire to feel her power, to hurt him, came on her again, keen not to be withstood.

"Yes," she said.

Possibly his face grew a little wearier; and he sighed so faintly that she only just heard it.

He stooped, took her hand, and kissed her fingers one by one, saying as he kissed each:

"My little finger—my third finger—my middle finger—my first finger—my thumb."

He had often kissed them, with those very words, before. But this afternoon there was a difference in his kisses and his tone: he might have been kissing them and bidding them good-bye.

He stood upright, still holding her hand, and looking down at it with eyes so bright that there might have been tears in them, and said:

"The most beautiful fingers in the world."

She thrilled as he had thrilled her again and again.

He laughed a gentle reckless laugh which ended on the weariest note, let fall her hand, and said:

"And now they're all yours again, dear angel."

He walked quietly out of the room without looking at her face.

II

SHE looked at the closed door with eyes full of a sudden disquiet, rose nervously, and took two steps towards it. She stopped and smiled, and with a little sob said:

"Oh, but I will make up for it to him!"

During the rest of the afternoon she was by turns triumphant and uneasy. At a quarter to eight came Grierson, eager, jubilant. She did not like him at all; neither his heavy figure pleased her, nor his complacent face, nor his greedy, proprietory eyes. She quivered with a new repulsion when his thick, rough hand clasped her bare arm. The hand was shapeless; and Grey's suggestion about untanned alligator skin rose in her mind and clung to it. She loathed the hands and wondered why she had not always loathed them. He did not perceive that her lips were quite cold.

She came into the restaurant depressed, with none of the pleasure she had expected. The long room was not really bright; it was full of ugly, dull people; the band was playing an ugly tune. At table it was detestable to have Grierson's fleshy, smiling, complacent face right before her eyes. He did not perceive the keen dislike in her eyes, or that she emptied her glass of champagne before she tasted her soup. He beamed at her and called her little woman.

Then the band began a waltz she had often danced with the man she loved; and the thought of him suddenly came to her. It was more like a pang than a thought.

What was he doing? Sitting alone

in his rooms probably, tearing at his heartstrings. For a moment the restaurant went dark; and she saw him sitting there as clearly as ever she had seen him when she had been with him —more clearly. The restaurant grew slowly light again; and she could have put her head down on her arms and cried her eyes out.

Then she really saw him. He was coming down the room with the other woman. Utterly still, she gazed at them, her lips parted, her face blank.

They came nearer and nearer. He saw her, smiled and bowed. They came to the very next table. He put the woman into the chair facing her and sat down with his back to her.

Even Grierson heard her long-drawn, gasping sigh and saw the strain in her face.

"Anything wrong, little woman? Room too hot?" he said affectionately.

She shook her head; and he resumed his discussion of the respective merits of her husband's shoot and his own.

The whole of her was in her eyes. They devoured the other woman. She had never before seen her; and Grey had told her that she never should see her. But also he had said that if ever she did, she would never be able to accuse him of second-rate love. It was true: the woman was prettier, far prettier than herself; she had at least as good a figure; she was as well dressed. And her hands? If only she could see her hands. He had said that they were beautiful hands but not as beautiful as hers. She could only see that they were small.

She turned her eyes again to the woman's face. It was thinner than it should have been and a little drawn; and her eyes were tired. Doris well knew why. She hated those tired eyes. They rested on her lover's face so hungrily—when it was turned away.

The pair of them talked quietly; and the turmoil in Doris stilled a little. Grierson, warmed by the champagne, made love to her. He was not skilled; and she detested him. She was unresponsive; but that made no difference to him. He had complained before, and justly, that he always had to do all the work.

She lost no movement of Grey or the woman. He was drinking his champagne, her own favorite brand, quickly. She herself was drinking her champagne, Grierson's favorite brand, quickly. She could no longer eat. Grierson was eating heartily. He affected to believe that she was banting and was heavily jocose.

Then came the change. Her lover had been sitting upright. Of a sudden he leaned forward; and she saw him catch and hold the other woman's tired eyes. At first they gazed into his almost fearfully. Then, slowly, they grew no longer tired. They brightened slowly; they shone. They were beautiful eyes. The woman's face was no longer thin or drawn, its contours rounded to their natural beauty. There was a delicate flush on it; her lips were parted. Once Doris saw her be wholly still in a hush of sheer delight; and her eyes closed. When she opened them they were brighter with tears. They shone like stars in a cold sky.

Doris knew what Grey was saying—well. She knew how he was saying it, every quiet word striking a note on the heartstrings—and with what eyes! A pain rose from her heart to her throat, rending, stifling. Her forehead glistened with little beads of cold sweat. She gasped; and for a breath her face was twisted.

Grierson, busy with his bird, was watching her with curious but happy eyes. He turned in his chair, looked carefully at the other woman, and turned round again, smiling.

"Jealous, little woman?" he said, and laughed merrily.

She frowned.

By a greater effort she forced herself to drink some more champagne. It tasted very salt.

She took, or rather wrenched, her eyes from the other woman's face. They fell on Grierson's. They were so dull with pain that they did not show her hate. It was his fault—the stupid,

common brute. How she loathed him! How could she ever— She forced herself to look at his large, shapeless hands —hands that had caressed her. Alligator skin—and the smell—loathsome!

She panted softly. How she was suffering! From her heart to her throat —how it hurt!

It was no use: she could not keep her eyes from the other woman's face. It was transfigured—glorified. Grey was not leaning forward now; he was crouched forward, hunched together. She knew that tense attitude. He was a master playing on an instrument of love, his being absorbed in the effort to draw all its music from it.

He had forgotten her utterly—her hands, her eyes, her lips and the heart, on which, enchanted and thrilled, he had so often played. She hated him—hated him—more than she hated the woman—far more than she hated Grierson.

She could not drink her coffee; her throat was constricted.

The light in the other woman's eyes was searing her soul.

Grierson called the waiter, paid the bill, and said cheerfully:

"Come along, little woman."

She shook her head and with an effort said:

"Not yet."

She could not tear herself away from her stake.

Grierson frowned and said:

"But we shall miss a lot of the show."

She shook her head.

"Oh, but hang it all! What's the use of taking tickets for the show and missing half of it?" said Grierson querulously.

She paid no heed to his plaint; she did not hear it. She saw the other woman's lips move in three words. How many, many times had she herself said those words to her lover. The pang twisted her face; it twisted her body.

Grierson grew louder, persistent, badgering. He rose.

She rose, too. She had better go. She was at the very end of her endurance.

As Grierson put her cloak round her his rough fingers scraped her shoulder. She writhed.

She walked down the room, with her head straight, gazing straight in front of her. She burned to look at Grey's face; but she dared not. If it were set in an expression she knew, she might scream.

She came out of the restaurant aching; she sat in the theatre aching still but dazed in a reaction from the keener pain.

She scarcely heard Grierson's fat chuckles and his:

"That's a bit thick, eh?"

She was beyond disgust and detestation.

Then, a full hour later, the other two came down the gangway. They had sat in the restaurant, talking, making love, for a whole hour longer. Their seats were on the other side of the gangway, three rows in front. She saw Grey's profile as he drew the cloak from the other woman's shoulders. He was smiling.

Then, many times, she saw a little of his profile. It told her nothing. But the woman's face she could see nearly all the while, for she hardly looked at the stage, only at him. Oh, he had been thorough! He would be thorough. The woman was mad about him.

Now and again Doris writhed; and the pain rose and rose from her heart to her throat. At times for a whole minute a darkness fell on her eyes. That relief alone enabled her to endure.

When the last curtain fell she groaned in her relief that her torture was over.

Grierson was slow; and Grey and the other woman passed up the gangway in front of them. From the vestibule she saw him put her into a taxi and step into it himself.

That should have been the last pang; but the master torturer, Imagination, took up the fabric of pain where vision let it fall and wove on.

III

At a few minutes past ten the next morning she opened the door of Grey's flat with the latchkey he had given her and walked unsteadily into his sitting-room. Her eyes were bright with hate; her face was drawn and hard.

He lay back in his easy chair, his face set in its mask of weariness, pale about the lips and temples, rings under his sleepless eyes. The furrow between his eyebrows was deeper.

She gazed at him and stammered in a hard, uncertain voice: "G-G-Grierson stayed—half an hour."

She had come to say it.

He did not stir; his face stayed set in its weariness.

"I didn't," he said quietly and paused.

Then he added quietly: "And Kwanyin has gone, too."

Her eyes rose quickly to the mantelshelf, to the place where the beautiful figure had stood. In it lay some banknotes under a handful of silver.

Her lips parted: her hard face collapsed—there is no other word; and she became the most pathetic figure in the world, a little child who has been cruelly beaten. Big, hopeless tears gathered in her eyes and rolled down her cheeks.

He did not stir.

JOHN

By George B. Jenkins, Jr.

HE had read Schopenhauer, Ibsen, and George Bernard Shaw. He possessed an intimate knowledge of Greek verbs, and could discuss learnedly of the influence of the theories of Karl Marx. The financial problems of the day were playthings to him and he knew the age and disposition of women from a single glance. Higher mathematics, the chemical composition of laughing gas, the probabilities of chance, were each and all familiar to him. He could appreciate the more subtle points of a hand at Auction Bridge, as well as the more obscure points of mysticism.

And yet, he was absolutely the most inefficient elevator boy we've ever had in our apartment house.

WHEN a man tells a woman he has never loved anyone but her, two things may come to pass. Either he is lying and she believes him, or else he is telling the literal truth and she laughs at him.

A MAN, finding he is in love, thinks of marriage. A woman, finding a man is marriageable, thinks she is in love.

THE ENCHANTRESS

By Josephine A. Meyer

A BEGGAR maid fell in love with a Prince and she nigh to died of her sorrow for she was the lowliest in the land and he was the son of her King. Right so came an old dame to her, having pity of her plight.

"Leave to weep," quoth she, "arise and win thy love. Thou art fair and the years lie long before thee."

"Alas! What can I do?" cried the poor maid.

Then the old dame looked very wise and said she:

"There be a great Enchantress, dwelleth hard by. Go to her and serve her as an handmaiden and thou wilt learn of her spells and subtleties."

So the beggar maid arose and bound her hair and went unto the great Enchantress that lived hard by. And the Enchantress beheld she was fair and was right well pleased with her.

"And thou serve me a year and a day," quoth she, "thou shalt have aught of thy asking."

So the beggar maid served that Enchantress a year and a day in all good faith and at the end of that time came the Enchantress to her and said:

"Thou hast served me in all good faith for a year and a day. Now am I come to keep that covenant I made with thee, which is to grant thee thy heart's dear desire."

"I would marry the king his son," said the beggar maid.

The Enchantress gazed upon her for a long space the while she spoke no word and at last said she:

"Thine shall be the power. But there is toil in this. First must thou become my peer in magic to be worthy to encompass thy great estate."

"Nay, but he may wed another ere that time come," quoth the beggar maid in fear.

The Enchantress took from a secret place a crystal phial. In it was a liquid that was of the color of fire at night.

"Here is a potion," quoth she, "do but drink half thyself and cause him to drink the other half and it will keep his heart open for thee and thine for him unto the end of time."

With that the Enchantress wrought by spells that the maid might enter the hall of the King unseen and pour the portion into the Prince's draught.

And the beggar maid desired that the potion might be very strong and binding so she tasted not thereof herself, saying,

"My heart will always be open to him."

And she poured it all into his golden goblet. And the Prince quaffed of it and she was well content.

After seven years the Enchantress went unto the beggar maid and bespoke her thus:

"I have watched thee grow in magic and with each year behold thy love of it hath waxed greater. Thou hast come now to the end of what I know. Go hence now, to thy Prince who hath become King; assuredly thou wilt find his heart still free for thine entrance and thou art worthy to be Queen."

And the beggar maid raised her head from a great book of letters of scarlet and ultramarine and gold; and her face was lean and her eyes were large and bright and very strange.

"Nay . . . what King? . . . What Prince? . . ." quoth she.

SEPTEMBER

By A. A. Nadir

I

HE turned at the door.

"Think it over, John," he said, rolling a scarlet-and-gold-banded cigar to the left corner of his fat, sagging lips. "Think it over. It's a straight tip and a good 'un."

John Montagu shook his head stubbornly, a little wistfully, without replying, and the other walked away from the door and over to the nearest window.

He pointed at the panorama below that stretched in a drab checker-board of streets framed by jerry-built, pretentious apartment houses. To the west a few jets of trees, gnarled and scraggly and nostalgic, etched the cleft of the house canyons. Somehow, the paving contractors must have forgotten to uproot them when New York, obeying the merciless pressure from the southern rim of Manhattan, took half a million or so humans of assorted nationalities and ambitions and vices and chucked them into algebraic flats north and east of One Hundred and Fifty-eighth Street—ages ago, as the city reckons.

"Them people down there know you, don't they?" MacNamee went on.

"Yes."

"Well, and they've known you for—I don't mean to hurt your feelings none—but is it seven years?"

"Call it ten and shame the Devil."

"Sure. Ten." He put a pudgy, babyish hand on Montagu's shoulder. "Look here. It ain't a question of money. You'll get your same little old fat envelope as you did before. Nor it ain't a question of publicity. Pipe the word—and I double the size of them four-sheets and have your name printed in a real tony purple instead of black. It's simply that them people down there—and, after all, it's their little two-bit pieces that keeps the whole push of us going—are catching on to the fact that the lines on your forehead ain't altogether the result of rotten grease paint and too much squinting at the footlights. Think it over, John!" he admonished again, and left.

John Montagu stepped into his bedroom and picked up the hand-mirror.

It was a small, speckled glass, framed in narrow silver. He had looked into it often—naturally, since he was an actor—until the glass itself had seemed to take on some of the characteristics of the face which it mirrored so faithfully: the rather square forehead with the bumps of obstinacy sharply marked; the heavy-lidded, purplish black eyes; the bold, aquiline nose, breaking away as if to draw attention to the well-molded cheeks; the neck, straight and columnar like that of a Roman gladiator; the curved, dark-red lips, hardly disturbed by the small mustache.

He had always resolutely refused to shave off that mustache. He wore it even in powder rôles. It seemed to him a sort of covenant with the rest of manhood, away from the glare and the motley of the stage. Too, a covenant with womanhood.

"Not a bad-looking face," he thought as he put down the mirror.

And a well-known face.

Not on Broadway.

But what of that?

New York, after all, is not a town, but a collection of villages, stretching like a wedge between the slate gray of the Hudson and the cloudy chocolate brown of the North River, each village with its separate, carefully guarded provincialities; and if the people of certain sections prefer the harsh shimmer and glisten of the electric signs around Longacre Square, there are others—thousands of them, with money in the bank, money in their pockets, money to spend—who swear jealously by their own neighborhood and the celebrities of their own neighborhood.

John Montagu, for a number of years leading man of the MacNamee Players, his name blazoned black on staring ochre posters to right and left of the snug stucco-front theater on East One Hundred and Sixtieth, was the idol of his district, and since he was by no means a fool it did not trouble him that his name was hardly known to either the critics or the playgoers of the town farther south.

His home fame had even withstood the withering competition of the movies.

He was satisfied with what he was. He knew that the people who, a few days before the opening of each season, reserved their Saturday matinée seats for the coming six months would not permit a Forbes-Robertson, a John Drew, a Beerbohm-Tree, or any of the Barrymore clan to usurp the rôles in which he had become famous—to them.

The stringy-haired spinster on the floor above him, who went in for heavy Chautauqua culture and Ouija boards, kept him supplied with things pickled and brandied and jellied and had knitted him a silk muffler in resplendent magenta. The elderly negro woman who twice a week cleaned his apartment with the dawdling minuteness of inherited racial sloth thought his Othello "sure enough de grandest cull'd gen'leman I'se ever seen." The policeman of the avenue beat twirled his hickory with extravagant gestures not contained in the official regulations the night after he had applauded him as Don Cesar of Bazan. The raspberry phosphate mixer at the corner drug store squirted in an extra thumb length of the sticky juice when the actor called for his eleven a. m. coca-cola, and the woman around the side street—the woman with the superb, tired eyes and the superb, unlikely hair—gave a curious, flat sigh when she saw him swing along, malacca cane crooked from elbow.

Yes. He was the idol of that part of Gotham. Men had told him so. Women had written him so. The top tray of his trunk was crammed with letters neatly tied into bundles—letters pink and cream and rose and sky-blue and palest lavender and plain white, letters scented with every scent from muguet and rose jacqueminot to essence of skillet and scullery—all sorts of letters, telling the same tale in all sorts of language.

But when he picked the mirror up again and again studied his face, the ugly suspicion rose in his mind that MacNamee might be right.

There were crinkly lines running from the nostrils to the corners of his lips; a spider's web of fine, thin lines torturing the forehead; tired, puckered lines about the eyes. He remembered that yesterday he had been forced to touch up his mustache with henna, and that this morning, for the first time since he had taken this apartment years ago, the clanking, creaking, crunching two-ton drays pulling down the avenue had waked him before his usual hour. For the first time he had resisted the bracing invitation of a tubful of cold water.

He felt out of sorts. His vision was hazed with a faint headache that seemed to begin in the back of his skull and to draw a paining steel clamp about his temples—and then, quite suddenly, the thought came to him that the letters in the top tray of his trunk were rather dusty, rather yellow—and he threw his cigarette into the grate.

"Say, John—" a voice cut into his reverie.

MacNamee had come into the room without knocking, as was his democratic wont. A square of white was in his hands. He put it on the table.

"Letter for you, John," he announced. "Found it in the box-office rack." He coughed. "Speakin' about letters . . ."

"Who was speaking about them?"

"Well—I was." Again he coughed. "Say—don't misunderstand me. I never look at your mail. Not the inside, leastways. But—gosh!—I can't help seeing the envelopes—nor getting a sniff here and there—"

"What do you mean?"

"Well—I remember when you used to get a pile of 'em with every morning mail. Letters written by women! And now? Say, John, I'm a friend of yours. I ain't talkin' to you now as MacNamee, producer and manager. I ain't going to force your hand. You're a darned good actor, and you've made money for me. But—honest—I been in this business from the Bowery north. I been in this business since I shed my first blushing peg-top pants, and I tell you that when the leading man ceases gettin' female correspondence, it's time for him to switch—play the heavy-father dope—and to shave off his mustache . . ." he added as an afterthought.

John Montagu had opened and read the letter which the other had brought.

He looked up, smiling.

"You lose, Mac," he said, lighting a cigarette; "this is from a woman," and he put the letter in his inside pocket, handling it like something very precious—and very unexpected.

II

"In back of the gas-tower at seven" —the letter had said.

A far church bell was tolling the three-quarter hour, but already John Montagu was at the place of rendezvous, and he considered with a bitter smile that formerly he would have been from five to ten minutes late, would have sauntered up, swinging his cane, rather bored, superior—and the girl would have been there waiting for him, nervous, expectant.

Today it was he who was nervous and expectant. And he did feel the cold. He should have put on his overcoat. But it was a loose, eminently utilitarian raglan. Made him look bunched and elderly, and this form-fitting sack suit was the very thing—youthful, elegant—

He gave his mustache an extra twirl and walked rapidly up and down to get warmer.

A chill wind rattled in the black tracery of the trees near the gas-tower, blowing the dead leaves in fantastic whirls. They rose and fell on the wings of the wind, fluttering like wandering souls—to end in some miry wayside puddle.

There was a tang of autumn, sharp, sudden, saddening.

"Mr. Montagu!"—a low voice trembled from the gloom, and the actor turned and looked.

She was a child of the people, in the pathetic finery of the people, her hat imitating the audacious toques of Fifth Avenue in flimsy, broken straw and ribbons that shone cottony through their satin veneer; her shoes, thin-leathered, too high, bulging wrinkly above the ankles and dyed into a morose likeness of creamy twenty-dollar buckskins; her short dress skimpy where the loose, machine-made seams caught the flimsy, garish fabric and tore it.

But her face was small and pretty and alluringly freckled and pert with the pertness of the city streets. Her eyes were as blue as corn-flowers. Her teeth flashed even and white beneath her ready smile. Her hair was a wonderful shade of red, like curled sun rays. And John Montagu, looking at her from the glorious aureole of her hair to the cheap shoes with the bent, broken heels, compared her to a spring flower in a cracked, ungainly kitchen

tumbler—and he did not know what to say to her.

It was she who spoke first.

"Say—I'm crazy about your acting!"

"Are you?"

"Yah—plumb crazy! An' I just had to tell you so myself. You gotta excuse me writing to you. It ain't the sort of letter you're used to, I guess. Lots o' women write to you—" already there was an undercurrent of jealousy—"Society dames, too, I bet!" she went on, without waiting for a reply, taking his arm and looking up at him with a mixture of effrontery and shame.

"Say—every Saturday night I plunk down my little twenty-five seeds. Upstairs, centre aisle left, front row—that's my regular Saturday night hang-out—and I sure do hang across them balcony railings, believe me! Say, did you ever notice me?"

"It is very hard to recognize faces in the audience. The glare of the footlights, you know—" Montagu said, a little stiffly, in want of something better.

He was angry with himself. Formerly he had been able to talk to women—of all sorts, all classes. His lips had held glittering gifts, and they had drunk it as gold.

Tonight, with this adorable little woman clinging to his arm, he felt something like mental and physical apathy. A dull pain stirred in him.

But the girl rattled on, and presently he smiled at her lack of sophistication. To her the stage was real. He himself was real, the parts he played, the sentiments he uttered. She did not see beyond the tinsel and paint. He was to her a combined impression of everything noble and romantic—with a tang of attractive wickedness—and he pressed her closer to him, accepting the undisguised admiration with which she regarded him.

So they walked along, arm in arm. The evening was peaceful. Tiny flecks of gold were in the air; they ran together like children at play; they transformed themselves into strips of transparent cloth-of-gold. Even the sombre, squat contours of the gas tower shone like an amethyst jewel, and the lanky trees took dreamy, feathery outlines against the horizon.

Montagu was still silent. Her words—for she kept on talking—meant nothing to him. But he felt the warmth of her, and there rose in him a poignant longing for the sweetness of her face, the veiled blue depth of her eyes. He wanted to take her by her firm shoulders—to kiss her pouting, hesitating lips . . . and he knew that he would have only to stretch out his arms and she would come to him, ready to sacrifice the fate and the splendor of her youth, her life, to the momentary mood of his ripe, surfeited soul. . . .

She meant youth to him—the strength of youth, the hope, the promise, the glory—and he stared at her, charmed with that charm that carries with it a tang of both desire and irreparable loss, tingling with the sensation which begins like a caress and ends like a blow.

His fingers closed around her arm. He felt her tremble and thrill to his touch. Then a chill wind boomed up from the near river and struck him straight between the shoulder blades. He shivered. Again he was sorry that he had not brought his raglan. After all, it was September.

Then he thought of the girl.

"Are you warm enough dressed?" he asked.

She laughed.

"Sure—I'm as warm as toast!"

And he saw that her little pert face was aglow with warmth and youth, though the wind had caught in the decolletage of her blouse and was causing the thin, sleazy silk to stand out like a balloon.

Youth and warmth—and this was September—

A dull feeling of hopelessness rose in him and paralyzed his desires. Here was the spring of youth for which he was a-thirst. And he had not the courage to touch it with his lips.

He stared straight ahead.

A cloud bank had rolled up, but momentarily the frigid moon broke

through, and he saw a withered leaf fluttering down slowly from a branch and resting on the ground, in the glow of the silvery rays, quite lifeless, stiff, as if dead; but soon it stirred, then soared suddenly and flew, spinning and twisting, before the chill wind, driving helplessly into the gathering night.

And John Montagu dropped the girl's arm and walked away without a word.

III

"I GUESS you are right," he said, half an hour later, to MacNamee in his dressing-room at the theater.

"Right about what?"

"What you said this morning. I'll shave off my mustache and play the Heavy Father in the future—"

MacNamee turned slowly. "Made up your mind pretty darned sudden, didn't ye?"

"No." Montagu smiled. "It's been growing on me—for years."

He stepped over to the window and closed it.

"Cold, ain't it?" asked the manager.

"Yes," said Montagu, "September, you know. . . ."

He looked through the fly-specked panes. Outside, the shadows of night were gliding and twisting like shy courtezans. . . .

TRANSVALUATION

By Orrick Johns

OUT of the depths to the depths I call—not to the heights soon ending!
Who from the half descended mountain would turn back to the top?
What has life for our further spending
Left in her tinsel shop?

Out of the night to the night I go—to the vast black suns that swallow!
Who would pray to the callow noons, the copper dawns absurd?
Let me go far where none may follow
And no cry is heard!

Let me go far where loves are freed from the lesser loves that bond them!
What is this little dream of man, this little space of breath?
Sure, O gods, there are gifts beyond them:
Evil and good and death!

Sure, O gods, they are little things, since time can make them nothing,
And sure they are little men who fight, and little foes who mar!
Give me, O gods, the fire of loathing
And in the depths, a star!

A BACHELOR is a single man who has received the confidences of a married man.

THE CIRCUS PARADE

By Henry Sturgis

IT was the most elaborately gorgeous circus parade I had ever seen. The riotous-colored uniforms of the performers, as they rode by on sleek horses, were part of a delightful crazy-quilt. The clowns cut up with impossible agility. It was some circus parade!

And the animals! I have always loved animals. There were fierce-looking lions with spangles and hungry-looking tigers with long hair. The elephants were a sublime pink shade, but I knew, of course, that they had been calsomined in order to blend with the deeper pink of the rhinoceros. . . .

Later, the pretty nurse in the sanitarium bathed my head and told me it was lucky I hadn't taken just one more drink.

THE VIOLET

By Marcia Allen

I HIDE because I am bad.

* * *

I am a violet.

I am thought to be nun-like and modest and as sweet and shy as a little child.

Because I grow in silent, hidden places, I am considered pure and chaste.

I am not.

I know much wickedness.

Many things happen in shadowed, silent places that do not occur in the sunlight.

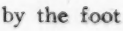
One time a fleck of blood from a man who was murdered glazed one of my petals.

Once my leaves were crushed by the foot of a beautiful woman who clung to her lover.

One day a bee left the honeyed flowers. . . . .

* * *

I hide because I am bad.



CARICATURE

By Ben Hecht

I

THE first thing that I remember noticing about him was that he was an elbow-steerer. This is nothing conclusive against a man. I have known elbow-steerers of excellent character, men who ripened with acquaintance into arresting and piquant companions. But always an elbow-steerer is to be accepted gingerly, with the eyes narrowed, with the lips pursed.

As I remember it, he appeared at the end of the marble hotel corridor, which in Chicago is still known, for all I know, as Peacock Alley, an elbow-steerer in full action. His fingers were rigidly sunk into the lady's elbow. He guided her in a masterful manner down the deserted stretch to where I sat and waited. A pilot coming into port, a pathfinder, a mine-layer, the creature picked his way down the utterly vacant corridor, a corridor without obstruction, danger or mystery, and I watched him with a sinking heart.

"So this," thought I with that spiritual laceration which the sight of this particular lady once upon a time invariably aroused in me; "so this is what she's fallen for! She passed me over for this!"

I had been prepared to loathe the fellow when I first heard of his marriage to Helen. Offhand, sight unseen, I had set him down in my mind as one to be accepted with suspicion and slow, careful reconnoitering.

But as the days passed and the blow lessened I had begun to think kindly of the man. Even his name, Joshua Briggs, had begun to lose some of its melancholy significance. After all, there was probably some quality to a man Helen would marry. She was a woman of taste, refinement, aye, genius. She could sing like a lark. I remember her sitting at the piano, singing as if the world were hidden from her, bringing purple distances into the little balcony room, her face like a little pool of moonlight in the dark, her voice throbbing, enchanting, pouring from her parted lips.

"Some day," I used to tell her, "I will write as you sing. There is no one who sings like you. Calvé and Melba will some day sit at your feet."

These things I remember now very clearly, but more clearly I remembered them as I sat and waited for her and her new husband.

The honeymoon over, Helen had written me. The name at the foot of the brief letter had plunged me into that opalescent state peculiar to discarded suitors about to meet again their lost ones. I shaved, I massaged, I donned a festive tunic, I selected a cane of black lacquer, I sought the most delicate of stimulants, a rare yellow wine, and I sat myself down at the far end of the corridor, as had been appointed, and I mapped out repartee and epigram.

Would she be wistful when she saw me? Ah, what would I not give for just one little shadow in her eyes, I who had once aspired to the fires of love! What would I not give for one intimate tremor as her hand came into mine, one little poultice for an outraged heart. Actually I had determined to be magnanimous, to shine with a joyous, steady light, to seize upon the fellow, to slap his back and pump his hand and whisper something about liquor. I would precipitate no crises.

I would not mar the inexplicable joys of her love for another man by any exhibition of meanness. I would accept him. I would accept her, them, it. I was above the messiness of emotions. And then the creature appeared.

As I watched his portentous air, his grim solicitation as he progressed down the corridor, as I noted the wrapt and scientific manner in which he manipulated the elbow of her whom I had loved and lost, I knew him at once for what he was, an elbow-steerer superb, a Grand Proprietor. Know you, there are degrees and varieties of elbow steerers. There are the dubious cavaliers who learned their manners from a dancing teacher, the professional escorters, the knightly ice cream soda fans. There are the shifty, hesitating, inexpert species and, too, the maudlin roués who batten upon surreptitious caressings of funnybones. But he was none of these.

Do I seem too tolerant, too superficial in my judgments? And do you set my foment down to a petulance unworthy, perhaps an old man's prejudice? If so I will confide to you that all my life I have been a judger by symbols. A wink, a chuckle, a bow leg, a casual grimace for me always have determined character. Show me a man who effects brown tunics and scratches his nose when he speaks and I will prove you he is a snuff-maker's eldest son and not to be trusted. Show me a woman who wears long earrings and walks pigeon-toed and I will demonstrate to you that she is a trapeze performer.

To revert, he, the man who appeared in the marble corridor with his fingers sunk in the elbow of the lady I had loved and lost, he with his all-protecting air, his all-combating manner, was a Grand Proprietor. I saw the symbol and I knew the man.

"So this," thought I again, "is her choice. This the person who succeeded where I failed, this the Turk in whose Yildiz she will henceforth sing."

To my horror, I remember it keenly, I noted further as they approached that he was also a spot walker. Yes, by the Toothless Fates, a walker of spots, a creature who cunningly stepped upon precise and related points in the patterns of carpets, and corridors, who pounced upon cracks in the pavements.

I arose trembling.

"I have heard a great deal about you," said the man, eyeing me with a calm and measuring eye, slipping one foot cleverly over one of the diamond squares which formed the pattern of the marble flooring. "How do you do. Mr. Cour."

"Mother," said Helen, "and sister are waiting in the lobby."

"Yes," said the man, "they are anxious to meet you."

I recovered my voice.

"As an old friend of the family," I began, "I wish first to offer my congratulations."

It was only the beginning of my speech. There were remarks of great weight and scintillation planned to follow. I do not remember saying them. In fact, the remainder of that entire evening is in a haze to me. There was a short fat woman whom Helen called mother. There was a tall acidulated thing she referred to as sister. And there was Josh Briggs. Ah, they were a family for you. Grim, joyless, shrewd they seemed to me to be continually pouncing upon evils and wiping them out. Devastations surrounded them. And the most horrible thing was Helen in their midst.

II

A WEEK I spent in the shadow of their presence. During that week I learned many things. It appeared that in marrying her Josh had not only conferred upon Helen the joy of his love but that he had plucked her even as a brand from the burning. He had rescued her from godless ways. He had found her singing, laughing, thrilling at the touch of beauty, which is only one of the many masks of Satan, and he had enlightened her and saved her. She no longer sang. She no longer

laughed. Nor did she thrill at the touch of beauty.

They had pointed out to her that song, except when uttered in the worship of the Lord, was a demoralizing power. It snared citizens into vice, it led its victims into theaters.

It is difficult to describe all the details of the change which had befallen Helen. The three of them, indecently stupid, had captured and stripped her. They forbade her the society of strangers. Josh was their hero. Around him the two women gravitated. When he smiled they smiled, when he frowned their indignation blazed forth upon a helpless world. And of all the unmitigated asses, of all the banal, insufferably pompous hand rubbers, Joshua Briggs was the most complete, the most perfect that ever flourished under the protection of an indulgent Republic.

There was nothing to do. I went about during that week catching now and then a glimpse of Helen, unsmiling, calm. Now and then we spoke to each other. But always there was a far-away sound to her words as if she were speaking from other worlds.

Sometimes we met, we were living at the same hotel, and this was not difficult, for unexpected moments, and remained silent waiting for the arrival of one of the Briggses. They were never long in arriving. They had appointed themselves the angels of the Lord and as such they hovered ever close to her whom they had saved. Evidently they deemed the process not complete. For one day I found her in tears. It was the seventh day.

At first I passed on. She was sitting on the mezzanine floor of our hotel almost hidden from view behind a Chinese screen. The floor was deserted.

As I moved away rage seized me.

At the stairs I paused and turned.

I walked back to her and sat down at her side.

In that moment the determination to save her, to rescue her had matured. My mind was made up.

We did not speak for a moment. I waited until she had dried her eyes.

Then I said to her,

"I want you to tell me about this thing you've gotten into. I think I can help you."

She shook her head and answered, "You know what it is."

"I suspect," I admitted. "But why are you crying now?"

Her eyes, still luminous with tears, became miserable.

"Oh," she said, "I can't see any way out of it. I married him and that's all."

"What has he been doing now?" I demanded. "Tell me, Helen."

Then, as she made no reply, I placed my hand over hers and went on with an effort at optimism.

"Come, come, it's not so terribly awful. Matrimony requires adjustments, you know, and all sorts of delicate work, all sorts of. . . ."

Her hand tightening stiffly about my fingers brought an end to my efforts. She shuddered and began to talk in a low miserable voice.

"He won't let me sing, even to myself," she said. "It doesn't seem possible. But his mother insists. She says it leads to Hell and perdition."

"Good God," I interrupted.

"They've forbidden me to see you since they learned you wrote poetry. And . . . and he's burned my books."

"Helen," I cried, "what are you talking about!"

"And there are other things, Billy," she wailed. "I can't stand it!"

"You don't have to!" I said savagely.

"It's like being a prisoner and worse. I've had two months of it now and I can't see any way out."

III

I REMAINED silent. No doubt my brain was somewhat staggered under this vision of Helen as a serf, shorn, stripped, imprisoned. No doubt I remembered her as she had been, the Helen who sang and laughed and made merry a dull world by the mere light

of her eyes. There was something inexpressibly tragic at the moment.

Gradually the rage passed from me and an impatience gave way to an emotion which choked and confused my words.

After several ineffectual starts I managed, I remember, to say, "I love you, Helen, more than in the old days," and then to fall silent again and shiver.

She bade me hush and I hushed.

But her hand remained in mine and my remark seemed to have caused her to stop weeping.

"It was all a mistake, Briggs and the marriage, and we can forget it," I whispered.

Womanlike she inquired what I meant, and manlike I stuttered with my sinful thoughts running riot in the back of my head.

Finally I blurted out,

"You can come away with me. It will be escape for you and Heaven for me. There's no use throwing any melodrama into it. Let's take it calmly and sanely."

"Hush, Billy," she said.

"Do you want to?" I whispered.

"It's not a matter of what I wish to do," she answered.

"You mean something about morality, fidelity, as in lodges?"

"Call it by any odious name you wish," she said.

"Marriage," I quoth, "is a social institution. It has about as much to do with God or the spirit as political elections."

"I didn't come to argue marriage with you, good Heavens. Please, Billy, spare me a debate. I'm not equal to it. I don't want to debate. I won't debate . . . anything."

"All right," I agreed amiably. "Let's not debate anything. Let's admit that marriage is whatever in Hell it is. I don't know. But we won't debate it. Now to the facts. This witchburner of yours."

"Joshua is not a witchburner," she interrupted.

"Very well, this saint in caricature whose name you bear. . . ."

"Billy," she said desperately, "there is no use spending your time calling people names."

"Some people are best described, Helen, by cursing. Three great round oaths would give any one, any intelligent person, a fine analytical study of Joshua. Four snappy curses would reveal Joshua's mother, full length. As for his sister. . . ."

"Oh, Billy, be serious, please."

"Serious," I said. "Do you suppose there is anything flippant in asking a married woman to elope with one . . . in seeing the woman you love butchered and murdered. . . ."

"I won't elope."

"Never mind that this moment. We haven't come to your answer yet."

"We have. And passed it."

"No, we haven't. I want to know first before we really begin whether you have any love for this creature?"

"No."

"Any respect or sneaking admiration?"

"No."

"Then from what you tell me, and from what I've seen, you're a sort of marital convict. You're a spiritual slave. They're a bunch of harpies feasting on your beautiful soul. How in the name of the hundred and seventy-five Gods of Intelligence did you ever happen to?"

"Billy!"

Her voice had a dangerous ring.

I subsided.

I pressed her hand.

"Forgive me," I lied. "I am not myself when I think of the fellow."

"Don't think of him, Billy. You've done me a lot of good in letting me talk like I have. And now forget it. Let's go."

I clung to her hand.

"It's your only chance, Helen," I pleaded. "Come along with me. You know me well enough to trust me, whatever happens. You can't go on living in this Hell."

"No, Billy."

"You don't love him and every day you'll love him less. You'll hate him.

He'll steal everything lovely from your life."

"I can't," she said. "I don't know why."

"Yes, you can," I urged, "I'll love you forever."

"It's too late."

I could think of nothing else to say. My heart pounded within me. Rage and desire, love and hate swept me into a delirium.

I managed to repeat,

"You can't go back to that mess. You're young, Helen — twenty-five. Think of it. Throwing yourself out of the world like this! And what about your voice and your dreams. Good God!"

The tears streamed from her eyes and she continued to shake her head as I continued to plead.

Suddenly she leaned toward me and her arms encircled my neck. Her lips fastened themselves to mine and a panic of hope and joy shot through me.

"Good-bye," she said, "and thanks."

I sat in a daze and watched her rise.

She seemed to sway as she moved from me and at the other end of the floor I saw three figures.

They stood rigidly against the blazing lights of the hotel, three grim and merciless tyrants. Joshua was the first to see her and a prodigious frown swept his face. The mother was the second and her lips hardened into fearsome lines. The sister came forward. She reached out her hand and seized Helen by the arm and led her to Joshua's side.

I could not hear them talk. I sat and watched them surround her, hovering about her, worrying her like a pack of hounds some fair quarry. She did not look back and the last I saw of her was the back of her slim straight figure moving slowly toward the stairs, the fingers of her husband rigidly sunk into her elbow and steering her, ominously, portentously.

IV

And that memory of Helen I carried with me for thirty years. All that I have written I gradually forgot as one forgets things growing old. Sometimes there would come to me in the years memories of Helen at the piano, singing with her face raised like a little pool of moonlight in the dark, singing an enchantment into life. At the opera, at the concert, I recalled her, and sometimes in the presence of many women I recalled the sweetness and the beauty, the lighted eyes and laughing mouth which they never seemed to equal.

But always after such recollections there would come to me this other, this memory of Helen moving from me with the fingers of a man sunk in her elbow, an elbow-steerer, a curse upon the tribe, a murrain on the host of them!

It so happened that during those thirty years I never saw or heard more of Helen. As time passed I grew glad of this. With age there comes that peculiar intelligence which the philosophers call resignation.

I am now a thin, grey-faced man with neither tears nor laughter for the world. Upon the shelves of my library are scattered a few volumes which bear my name and in them I have told my histories.

I am not, however, one of those who pass into hiding with the event of age. Rather do I caper about, cackling witticisms in odd corners, shaming the young with epigrams remembered from their fathers. I still enjoy savor of rage, the delicate lust of smiling. There are certain dignities which I insist upon, certain severe graces with which I ennoble sterile moments.

Thus I will skip these thirty years, merely waving the wand of assertion for you and tell you how it came about that I remembered things forgotten for three decades, remembered them all minutely and savagely and with the zest of youth. It was at the home of Mrs. Lawson that the memory returned.

For some years, ever since I had come to London, in fact, I had pursued a habit of visiting the Lawsons the

second evening of every month. George Lawson and his wife Harriett had grown into my life so as to become a part of the routine of my thoughts. The buxom regality of the lady invariably cheered and sustained me, the fine discrimination of the man always managed to soothe and charm me.

On the second evening of this last June I was sitting in the cool drawing-room of the Lawsons' house in Half Moon street. There were several people scattered about, a little woman with black hair and shining eyes dressed in a weird grey, a tall, dignified creature who seemed to be folded up as she sat upright in her chair. The others, a lemon-faced man and a bulgy crony of mine host, occupied casual places. We talked about the war, about religion and occasionally stopped to listen to a faint, irritating humming which came out of an inner room.

I looked at Lawson quizzically. It was unlike these evenings to have even the minor annoyance of some anxious amateur to contend with.

But the talk went on and Lawson catching my gaze nodded with a twinkle in his eye and remained silent. The persistent strumming of the piano, the out-of-tune chirpings which accompanied it finally startled my nerves out of calm.

I managed to whisper to Lawson,

"Good Lord, what have we there?"

As I spoke, Mrs. Lawson appeared and nodded toward the little group.

"We're going to have some music," she said, and beamed with an amiable belligerence in my direction. I nodded.

"Oh," said Mrs. Lawson. "You haven't met her yet."

"Who?" I inquired bluntly. I had an intimation that the strummer and chirper was intended.

"You were a bit late," said Mrs. Lawson, "if you please."

She beckoned me. I arose and followed.

In the inner room I perceived several women and a short, pompous man. But the woman who riveted my attention was the strummer, the chirper. She was a preposterously bulging creature, a caricature. She was dressed in green, a vicious shining green which smote the eyes as a blow. For the moment I could not remove my gaze from her dress. I stared at its loops, at its ribbons, at its laces and terrible confusion. Never had I seen such a strange dress in my life.

Then I encountered her face.

Her face was the face of an old woman, folded and wrinkled. But over it was smeared a layer of startling rouge and the eyes, heavy and flabby, were quickened with stencilings. Large earrings dangled from the tips of her ears. Hair red and flaming surmounted her head and a litter of jeweled pins. When she came forward to meet me she cocked her remarkable head on one side in the manner of a parrot and extended a wizened, heavily ringed hand. Her voice greeted me with a horrible simper, a simulated girlishness. The whole figure was impossible. Never off the burlesque stage had I seen its equal.

"A woman of eighty, ninety," flashed through my mind, "in the hideous masquerade of youth. Good God!"

I stared longer than was polite. I gasped more than was kind. I could only shake the little wizened hand and marvel at this bizarre apparition. The name utterly escaped me. I heard Mrs. Lawson mention that the creature was to sing and, fascinated, I watched her trip daintily towards the piano bench.

"Mr. Cour, will you turn my music?" she inquired sweetly.

Her rolling eyes turned themselves toward me in some uncanny attempt at coquetry. This caricature, this burlesque, giggled, arched her preposterous eyebrows and inclined her head. The short, pompous man waddled to her side before I could recover sufficiently to reply. As she searched among her music Mrs. Lawson drew me aside and whispered,

"Don't you know her? Heavens! She's quite the talk of the town. Bags of money since her husband died. . . .

a man named Joshua Briggs . . . surely you've heard of him. Made millions in leather . . . died just last year . . . I knew her then in America. . . . Don't stare so . . . I know she's ghastly . . . acts like a two year old . . . Heavens. She was perfectly splendid before Mr. Briggs' death. . . . splendid . . . one of the most exquisite and refined women I have ever met . . . I remember her at her home. . . . Oh, so sweet and charming . . . and now look at her . . . seems to have lost her reason utterly . . . in just one short year . . . and the worst of it is she insists on singing . . . Heavens . . . why, she has never sung in her life before . . . I inquired . . . never . . . did you ever see such a fright though, William, really, did you? She . . . she's going to start."

I had heard only fragments of Mrs. Lawson's talk.

It was Helen, Helen born again, liberated after thirty years, Helen renewing her youth.

I stared open-mouthed. I shuddered. A pain, the laceration of memory struck at my heart.

During the few moments which followed Mrs. Lawson's silence the truth swept in upon me. I saw her again moving toward the stairs, the fingers of her husband sunk rigidly into her elbow, swaying, vanishing. . . . I saw again the grim, terrible trio hovering about her, guiding her out of sight. And then I dreamed in an instant the thirty years of her life.

"He has forbidden me to sing . . . He has burned my books. . . . He thinks it is Hell and perdition."

Out of the years the words floated back to me.

With a half senile gesture, the tragically ridiculous creature at the piano straightened out the green dress, the flounces, thrust a withered silken ankle forward to the pedals, grimaced under the layers of rouge and stencilings and struck at the keys. Out of the years came to me a song long forgotten, a song which does not live in the world any more.

The caricature at the piano was singing it. With her face raised, a grotesque panel under the yellow lights of the room, this woman sat and sang, her voice breaking, her throat tightening hideously.

Now and then a full round note slipped startlingly into the grating discords. The suddenly familiar words awakened a fear in me. She at the piano became some grotesque ghost of one I had known. Her hollow shoulders mocked at me. I watched her for a moment as, with her face raised and oblivious to the sneers of the room, she sat and sent forth a quavering voice in search of youth, sat and gestured and grimaced and preened over the keys. I saw her eyes roll with a ghastly coquetry toward me. . . . For that moment she became as some beribboned, berouged and bespangled maniac. And then I saw her as she was . . . Helen in quest of a youth buried and gone forever. . . .

I rose and fled from the room.

ALL women practice but two kinds of acting. Their own and their nearest rival's.

THE happiest wives are those whose husbands tell the most consistent lies.

THE END OF THE LINE

By Willard Kenneth Bassett

A WOMAN with a baby sat in the far corner of the forward section of the car, apart from the other occupants. It was one o'clock in the morning and the last car for Berkeley that night. The woman was turned sidewise on her seat, her elbow resting on the window-sill and her chin in the palm of her hand. She wore no hat and the waves of brown hair fell attractively about her forehead and half hid her ears. Her quiet clothing was good and in taste. Her shoes were neat and reasonably fashionable. She was not more than twenty-five years of age.

The baby, perhaps two years old, sat on her lap. His round head was topped with golden curls, each separate curl jerking fascinatingly to the rhythmical sway of the car. His eyes, with that expressive wisdom baby's eyes have, took in the activity about him and then, satisfied, watched the passing street lamps in the dark outside the window. Now and then the woman leaned forward and kissed the curls.

Bud Laird sat opposite. The presence of the woman and baby in the car was disquieting to him. He had quit the office in time to snatch a cup of coffee and two sugared doughnuts which left him with a deep sense of satisfaction and a dime. This mental state was augmented by the realization that during the day he had written up a sensational murder and an exclusive divorce; his tobacco pouch was full; he had not forgotten his pipe and had an abundance of matches. And to accentuate the anticipated pleasure of the half-hour's ride home he had possessed himself of a magazine in which was a short story by Jack Blund, one of his best friends.

But in contest for Laird's interest, Blund and his magazine story capitulated to the woman and baby in the corner of the car. He read a paragraph or two of Blund, but looked up with startling realization that he remembered nothing he had read. His pipe went out and he did not re-light it. Instead he watched the woman and baby across the car. He found himself speculating on what they were doing at that time in the morning, alone, on the last car to Berkeley. He caught her glance as she again bent forward and touched the baby's curls with her lips. He thought her eyes looked tired and sad.

Laird scanned the other occupants of the section of the car. A sense of pity came over him as he took in their absolute imperturbability. To them the woman and the baby were only a woman and a baby; to him the presence of the two at that hour and unattended was living proof of tragedy, indefinable, perhaps, but tragedy nevertheless. Ten years of newspaper reporting had shaped a philosophy which made no allowances for matters of interest that were not tragedies. How could this be otherwise? A woman and a baby, both hatless, both attractive in their respective ways, and riding alone on the last car at one o'clock in the morning—it spelled tragedy from every point of view.

The baby's head began to rock at the sway of the car and finally fell to the side in abject surrender to extraneous forces. The woman gently pressed the little body back against her and nestled

the curls in the crook of her arm. Laird again believed that her eyes showed weariness and care.

He turned back to the other occupants of the section. They had dwindled to three. In the farther corner, a policeman he knew, off duty and on his way home, was buried in the open sheets of an early edition of the morning paper. Laird doubted that the officer had even noticed the woman and the baby. He made mental comment of the inherent blindness of policemen. Opposite the officer a middle-aged laborer, apparently much the worse from over-indulgence, was huddled semi-unconsciously in a corner. A few seats from Laird a comfortable, self-satisfied individual sat smoking and looking at nothing, apparently thinking of nothing.

The laborer awoke on a quick jerk of the car, strained his eyes into the dark outside the window, jumped up and stumbled out at the next corner. Laird looked back to the woman and sleeping baby. What was their story?

He refused at first to concede that his next resolution was prompted by trained curiosity, but he admitted to himself that the spirit of gallantry it indicated might be partially professional. He resolved to ask the woman, when she stepped from the car, if he might accompany her home? He pretended to read a line or two of Blund while he shaped the form in which he would speak to her.

"I beg your pardon, madam, may I—"

Here, if she indicated her annoyance, he would add quickly:

"I am going home to a wife and a baby like yours. I'm a newspaper man. I work nights. May I walk with you; perhaps you will let me carry the baby?"

Shifting his eyes to the two across the car and back again to his magazine(he attempted to fancy her reply. Would she stare coldly at him and walk away? Would she thank him and accept his escort? Would she express her gratitude and refuse his offer? He looked at her again with narrowed eyes and felt himself baffled. She might do either. He rehearsed his intended offer and decided, at any rate, that it was good and the gentlemanly thing to do.

Turning back to Blund, he read another paragraph, but the creative power of his friend in print was not nearly so interesting to follow as his own imaginative experiments. The sleeping baby moved restlessly. What was the story of the two? He became consciously irritated at the presence of the mother and child, wholly ignorant that they were the cause of his discomfort.

Then, of a sudden, the newspaper instinct asserted itself, unbidden. With alarming precision Laird's mind formed the introductory paragraph:

Her eyes brimming with tears, and a golden-haired, wondering baby clutched in her arms, Mrs. Mary Jones, 123 Tenth street, Berkeley, walked into the Oakland Police Station at midnight last night and asked Sergeant Bob Forgie if the police would help her find her husband.

According to Mrs. Jones, who is young and extremely pretty, Jones left their home yesterday afternoon after dinner and following a quarrel, the particulars of which the woman refuses to give. She said——.

At this point in the mechanical process of the newspaper man's mind, the self-satisfied individual got up and stepped off the car at the next corner. Laird returned to a realization of Blund's story in the magazine. He read three lines when he again looked up at the woman and baby. Perhaps that was not the story. He tried another:

Found by Patrolman Mahern wandering aimlessly about in lower Broadway shortly before midnight last night, a woman giving the name of Mrs. Mary Jones, 123 Tenth street, Berkeley, and clutching a beautiful, golden-haired baby in her arms, was brought to the Oakland Police station.

There she told Sergeant Bob Forgie that she had been walking the streets since early evening, when she had left her home after a quarrel with her husband. She tearfully refused to have Jones sent for and denied all offers of the police to provide an escort for her to return home. She finally consented to go if allowed to go alone. She was put on a Berkeley car by Mahern and——.

Here the police officer, whom Laird

knew, folded up his paper and knocked the ashes from his pipe. He nodded to the newspaper man as he walked past him to the front of the car and dropped off.

Scarcely four paragraphs of Blund had been read and comprehended. The baby moved again and again, Laird raised his eyes cautiously to the half-view of the mother's face. He reflected that the car was approaching the end of the line and he speculated as to the district in which she lived. He went over again the form in which he had decided to address her and still found it satisfactory to himself. She leaned forward and touched her lips to the topmost curl on the sleeping baby's head. As she turned, her eyes, with their wearied expression, met Laird's and instantly turned away. Laird did not look back to Blund this time. Young Jones, whoever he was, was now coming in for his share of Laird's ire. A new introduction automatically framed itself:

John Jones, young Berkeley mechanic, is in a cell in the Oakland City Jail, the tears of his weeping wife still fresh on his cheeks and the innocent chortles of his two-year-old baby agonizing in his memory.

Jones was arrested last night at his home on a charge of passing fictitious checks. His wife, hatless, and clutching her baby, followed him and the police officer to the very doors of his cell, but was refused admittance. She stood at the door of the prison until nearly midnight, when she was told that she would be compelled to return to her home.

Mrs. Jones, young and very pretty, left with her baby and ——.

The street car took the curve at the corner a block from the end of the line. The motorman released his air as the car jerked to a stop. The woman turned in her seat and tightened her arms about the baby, preparatory to rising. Laird got up, deciding to speak to her then and assist her in alighting from the car. But the motorman walked back into the compartment and stopped between Laird and the woman and baby. He bent over and took the sleeping child from the woman's arms.

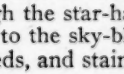
"I'll carry the boy for you, Mary," he said. "You go on out to the other end and get your same seat. Just the run to the barn now, and then home for us."

THE LOST LOVER

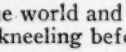
By Harold Cook

I HAVE looked 'neath the cloak of morning stars that a fairy wore,
And I have gazed through the star-haunted hair of Mélisande
Leaning down, leaning down to the sky-blue water forevermore,
Tangling her hair in the reeds, and staining her hands on a frond.

But I found him not, he, whose eyes were heavy with dreams of mine,
Under whose heart lay warm the words I had whispered to him in the night
Until I came to the edge of the world and heard, like a song divine,
Him calling, and saw him kneeling before a dark star in its flight.



A SOCIAL climber never realizes that the journey begins at the top rung.



MONSIEUR LE MARQUIS IS NOT AT HOME

By Achmed Abdullah

AT the Cercle Richelieu, Arsène Neraton, the caustic feuilleton writer of the *Revue Tout-Paris*, used to say that the old Marquis Alain de Chabot-Perhoet reminded him of that ancient river street which dates back to the days of Philippe-le-Bel and which is called to-day the Quai des Grands-Augustins, while the Marquis's valet and general factotum, one Marc Lapauze, reminded him of the poster-covered police kiosque at the other end of the quai, not far from the Pont Neuf.

"Yes. A police kiosque. But, in spite of the salutary law which separates Church and State, a police kiosque topped by a celluloid crucifix and surrounded by a pinchbeck halo," Gautran de Fairdict, the clergy-baiting young Norman, would add. And then both gentlemen would laugh boisterously and disturb the sober-minded, silk-hatted domino players, intent on "Fives" and "Matador."

Of course the comparison was Parisian. Thus baroque, sardonic, trenchant, cruel. But true with the clear logic of France.

For the Quai des Grands-Augustins, which was once hallowed by the swinging pageant of all France and whose stony entrails once echoed to the brave clouting and clanking of Bourbon history, has changed, these latter days, into a rag-fair of things for sale: fine, dusty, brittle old things—books and pictures and bronzes and bits of wood, carved, painted, gilded, fretted. A street where he who seeks can find—perhaps a tubercular Virgin after the manner of Mignard; strange old editions, bound in hand-tooled pig's skin, of Saint Thomas Aquinas, Baronius, Bossuet and Moses Mendelssohn; antique vases carved by Romanesque goldsmiths, twelfth century enamels from Limousin and the Auvergne, *champlevés* from Limoges, lacy screens from Augerolles and sunny Amiens, sculptures by Préault and Pradier.

All very beautiful, very old, very saddening. And all for sale across the counter—bits of the history, the grief, the glory of France, done up in brown paper parcels and tied with crimson twine—and sold to decorate the mantelpieces of burgess and tourist. . . .

The Marquis de Chabot-Perhoet, too, was for sale.

His name—like that of the Quai des Grands-Augustins — had a definite meaning in the annals of France. The story of his family *was* the story of France—step for step, honor for honor, glory for glory.

He was seventy years of age. His hair was snow white. His hands were thin and wrinkled like very old, very precious parchment. And he was for sale.

You could buy his endorsement if you wished to bid *Paroli* and *le Rouge* at any of the exclusive gambling clubs to which he belonged—because of his name. If you wished to float a new perfume, a new saddle, a new liqueur, a new racetrack, a new summer resort, or a copper mine in Greenland and wanted to impress the provincial investors, you could put his noble name on the board of directors for a small

block of stock or a moderate cheque. You could buy his escutcheon, his honor, the shreds and tatters of his senile passion, and every last one of his heirlooms—there was nothing left of them except a couple of old Florentine goblets from which he sipped his 1829 Meukoff cognac.

What stood between him and ruin was Marc Lapaue, his valet, a Breton like himself, as old as himself—he, whom the clergy-baiting young Norman at the Cercle Richelieu had compared to a police kiosque topped by a celluloid crucifix and surrounded by a pinchbeck halo.

He loved his master. He had never loved anybody else. Not even a woman. He knew his master's faults, his vices, his dishonor. But he loved him.

Nor was it a dog's love. It was the love of a man, a very good man, the sort of love which all the most expert psychologizing in the world can neither account for nor explain out of existence, and he watched over the Marquis de Chabot-Perhoet as the police kiosque near the Pont Neuf watches over the dusty shop windows of the Quai des Grands-Augustins.

Day after day it was the same tale.

A ring at the bell, angry, short, jerky, hectic—a square-shoed foot thrust in to keep the door from being slammed—and the butcher's purple face, the butcher's raucous voice:

"I want my money! I want to speak to the Marquis!"

"Monsieur le Marquis is not at home."

"Ah—*boug' de saligaud!* I am a poor man—I want my money!"

"I shall tell Monsieur le Marquis. He will send his cheque—tomorrow."

"No, no, no! You said that yesterday—and the day before—and for a week, a month! Always tomorrow, tomorrow! And tomorrow never comes! I want to speak to the Marquis!"

"Monsieur le Marquis is not at home," came again the valet's sad, drab voice, as, with surprising strength and agility, he pushed the fuming butcher out on the landing and slammed the door.

In the afternoon the same performance would be repeated, with the wine dealer this time. And again the next day and the next and the next—with glove-maker and shirt-maker and tailor, with jeweler and confiseur and baker and fruiterer.

Always the same demand for money; the same soft reply: "Monsieur le Marquis is not at home"; and always, after the unwelcome visitor had been pushed out on the landing, where he voiced his noisy and detailed opinion of the Marquis de Chabot-Perchoet to the cackling, whispering cooks of the neighboring apartments, Marc Lapauze would sigh a flat, cracked sigh.

It was not because he was ashamed of the scene. He believed in feudalism—benevolent or otherwise—and if butcher or breeches-maker should lose a few hundred francs here and there —*bon sang!*—why had the good God created these people except to accommodate gentlemen of quality? To his strange Breton intellect, his angular Breton limitations, which had never strayed very far from the Fleur-de-Lis and the *lettres de cachet*, any shopkeeper in Paris should be proud to give unlimited credit to a lord of the ancient house of Chabot-Perhoet.

He sighed because when he had said that his master was not at home he had lied. The Marquis was in his library, sipping his 1829 Meukoff cognac, looking at the lewd vignettes of a Belgian book, and smiling sardonically at the argument between creditor and valet drifting in.

And so the latter would sigh.

For he was a deeply religious man who knew that lying is a sin; who knew, too, though he did not express it to himself in these terms, that the halo about his head was pinchbeck, since he committed the same sin day after day.

It was a sin in the eyes of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—and in the eyes of Abbé Guerlin, the little wiry Jesuit around at the church of Saint

Exupère, with his twinkling black eyes, his kindly, drooping mouth, his hair, thick and sleek like seal's skin, his high-veined, eloquent hands, and his gentle manner of confessing and absolving—the abbé, who, to the Breton's direct creed, stood for really more than any third part of the Trinity. . . .

"I lied again, Father," Marc Lapauze said every Monday when he knelt in the confessional, with a lonely sun ray dancing in through the window set high in the wall and shearing a golden slice from the warm, brown gloom of carved, age-darkened oak and timeworn velvet cushions—"I lied again, my Father! Saturday I told the butcher that Monsieur le Marquis was not at home. On Friday I told the . . ."

"The fruiterer, my son—I know." The abbé shook his head. "And on Thursday you told the same thing to the confiseur—"

"No—that was Wednesday. Thursday I lied to the baker."

Abbé Guerlin hid a smile.

"Yes, yes," he said. "Friday, Thursday or Wednesday—butcher, baker or breeches-maker—it makes no difference. At all events, you committed the sin of lying, did you not, my son?"

"Yes, my Father."

And then the abbé, still hiding his smile, would say it seemed that Marc Lapauze had sinned because of live—

". . . which is a most interesting and knotty theological point, my son," he could continue, launching into the swing of sacred rhetoric; for he knew that the Breton would not understand a tenth of what he was saying—and knew, too, that his splendidly confusing diction, his jesuitical twists of mind and word and an occasional Latin or Hebrew quotation thrown in would so impress Marc Lapauze as to lull whatever suspicious he might have that the abbé was playing favorites with his sinning conscience.

"Last year," he said, "when I went *ad limina apostolorum*, I talked about the same point at length to the most venerable Cardinal-Archbishop of Rheims—after dinner—*Famen efficere ut crudae etiam fabae saccharium sapiant*—and so forth. He said that on the same object one can have two distinct opinions. The one theological and thus of divine origin. The other what the—ah—the scientists call rational, though perhaps it is only experimental, and therefore human. Both opinions may hold the germ of truth, though at times in apparent contradiction to each other—*Vel quod materies sit omnium maxime aeterna*—as said the great, if often mistaken, Erasmus. And, since everything when rightly approached can be rightly interpreted in spite of these same contradictions—*Tor sunt conati imponere Pelio Ossam*—and since what applies to the spiritual nature of God cannot be said to apply to the merely human nature of man, thus a sin at times may not be a sin—*if* this sin be not sinned because of sin. A sin of love you committed. But truly," again he smiled, "not of fleshly, thus sinful love. Shall we call it a sin of the love of loyalty—a sin of virtue—such a sin as was even committed by Agatha, the dear saint? Ah—the sin is not a bad one!"

"Go, my son, and sin no more," he would wind up, giving him a slight penance, thoroughly convinced that promptly the same afternoon Marc Lapauze would lie to baker or butcher and that promptly the following Monday he would kneel in the confessional and tell the same tale:

"I told the wine dealer that Monsieur le Marquis was not at home. I lied, my Father!"

II

And so the weeks grew into months; the Marquis de Chabot-Perhoet grew older and feebler and more wicked; Marc Lapauze older and feebler and more conscience-stricken; but the refrain remained the same—"Monsieur le Marquis is not at home"—and so did the confession, the slight penance, the absolution.

The only thing that changed was the attitude of the Marquis's clubmates, also that of his creditors.

For, one by one, the Marquis's contemporaries died. The new generation knew less and cared less about the name of Chabot-Perhoet.

Formerly, at the Cercle Richelieu, he had paid for dinners and drinks and occasional fifty-franc banknotes, for invitations to week-end parties and the use of a saddle horse, even for the fact that once in a while during a card game his wrinkled old hand would make *la volte,* would slip the winning ace to the bottom of the deck with nearly youthful skill—had paid for all this with his mind, which was keen as the thrust of a rapier.

"My friend," he would say, after slipping the ace and raking in the pot, "have you ever heard the story about M. de Girardin and that little Mme. de Kock, that bourgeois dandy, and his original and bizarre turn . . ."; and the other would think the anecdote well worth the price.

His fund of tales was large. There was his tale of the Duc de Morny and the spicy reason why he had succeeded in lifting the censorship ban which had weighed on Dumas Fil's *La Dame aux Camélies;* tales of the old Porte Saint Martin Theatre, when Marc Fournier still directed its stormy destinies—Marc Fournier, whose name was legend already at the time of the Franco-Prussian War; tales about Paul de Kock, that bourgeois dandy and his private hansom which he used to drive down the Boulevard des Crimes; tales of Ernest Blum and Léon Sari and Prince Murat—and the women appertaining therto: Cora Pearl and *La Dame aux Violettes* and Mme. Strauss and the Marquise de Rambouillet—

Tales that were wicked and clever, but scented with the oversweet, slightly musty perfume of other days—frangipane and peau d'Espagne, and the younger generation which filled the ornate rooms of the Cercle Richelieu, the chateaux and the racetracks, preferred the modern scents made by Coty.

The names which the Marquis used were familiar to them only from their school text-books, thus pedagogically hallowed, unfit to be wreathed with scandalous jest and anecdote. The gossip they liked to hear was gossip about Blériot and Duperdussin, Paul Claudel and Henri Bernstein, Jacques Lebaudy and the newest Brazilian multimillionaire, while the women about whom they liked to exchange talk and tips lived mostly in the stucco-faced apartment houses of the Quartier d'Europe.

They considered the old nobleman a bore and a sponger; they gave him no more dinners and no more occasional fifty-franc banknotes, and one Saturday when the ace slipped from his feeble fingers the board of governors of the Cercle Riechelieu met, with the result that M. Alain de Chabot-Perhoet was asked to send in his resignation.

The other clubs followed suit. Some members talked. The boulevards caught the ball of rumor and scandal. They gilded and tinseled and embossed it. They flung it wide and caught it again. The enterprising Alsatian and Portuguese and Levantine financiers who formerly had used the glitter of the Marquis's name to lure the provincial investor, seeing that the glitter was tarnished and brown, ceased sending cheques and neat little blocks of stock. The tradesmen shut off all further credit, and so one day the old Marquis sat in his library, pouring out the last drop from the last bottle of 1829 Meukoff cognac—Marc Lapauze had bought it with his last twenty francs, and perhaps the Marquis knew it and perhaps he did not—

"Marc," he turned to the valet, pointing at the two old Florentine goblets, "all my life I have refused to sell these two glasses, left me by my sainted grand-aunt, Euphrosine. I refused to sell them, *mon ami,* not because they were in any way sacred to the memory of that dear old grand-aunt, who died of the gout in the year when King

Louis Philippe made his little coup—but because they hold exactly the right quantity of cognac. My friend, I see the necessity of drinking in the future out of thick and ungainly bath-room tumblers. You will take these two goblets to that little shop on the Quai des Grands-Augustins and sell—"

Just then there was a ring at the bell.

"The butcher, I believe," said the Marquis, with a senile cackle that showed his toothless old gums; "tell him that I am not at home."

"Yes, Monsieur le Marquis"—and the ring was repeated, sharp, hard, authoritative.

"It does not sound like the butcher's," said Marc Lapauze, going toward the door, and the next moment the voice from the outer landing told him who it was and what it portended:

"Open, in the name of the French Republic! I have a warrant for the arrest of the Marquis Alain de Chabot-Perhoet, for fraudulently obtaining goods on credit. I am the *huissier*. Open, in the name of the law!"

Marc Lapauze looked at his master.

"Monsieur le Marquis," he asked, "what shall I do? What shall I say?"

"Tell him the truth—for once—" the Marquis laughed. "Tell him that I am not at home."

"The—the truth?"

"Yes—the truth—that I have gone out for all time—" and, quite suddenly, the Marquis reached into the half-open drawer of his library-table, took out a revolver and blew out his brains; and when the *huissier,* outside, hearing the noise, sensing the tragedy that had occurred, burst in the door with his massive shoulder, when he rushed through the corridor toward the library he found himself stopped on the threshhold by the old valet—who was speaking his usual formula in his usual flat, drab voice:

"Monsieur le Marquis is not at home."

And then he cried, with queer, cracked, high-pitched sobs, as old men cry.

THE STRANGE ASSEMBLY

By Helen Woljeska

I WAS dreaming.
In my dream I saw many women.
And behold—every one of them was myself.

* * *

There was the wilful, restless girl my parents resent.
And the docile, plaintive slave who bores my husband.
And the calm, kind, well-balanced woman my acquaintances meet.
And the turbulent, languorous creatures my lover clasps.
And the harmonious, playful mother my child adores.
And the gay, amiable hostess who receives my friends. . . . .

* * *

And among them all there moved a phantom with tragic, disconsolate eyes.
I knew her not.
Perhaps she alone was myself.

THE LIEUTENANT SHOOK HIS HEAD

By George Collier MacKinnon

THIS time it was Lieutenant Jackson's business that the Colonel happened to be nosing into.

"Dash it, Jackson," he was saying, as the tall young fellow was enduring him at the club, "I tell you, it's time you married."

The Lieutenant shook his head wearily.

The Colonel continued to chant his old song, domestic joys, devoted helpmeet, etc., etc. Ah, how often he had to listen to it—Lieutenant Jackson—every nerve on edge. For, of course, it was impossible, under the circumstances, to put forward his side of the case.

At dinner that night the Colonel was jabbering on the subject again. "Upon my word" (how very annoying was the way he had of smacking the table!), "the fellow goes about the post without so much as looking at one of the girls. Dash it! How do you explain it, my dear?"

The Colonel's pretty young wife hadn't the least notion. One really finds it quite difficult to get just the proper amount of sugar in one's coffee. . . .

THERE ARE TWO LADIES IN OUR LITTLE TOWN

By Harold Crawford Stearns

THERE are two ladies in our little town
  Who look like Knossan ivory statuettes.
They neither smile nor speak as up and down
  The street they walk, both sombre with regret.

Miss Maurya loves the world, and fears to tell
  Because she had a lover long ago;
Miss Barbara believes the world a hell,—
  Because she had a lover . . . strange, you know.

To lift their sorrows, we would gladly give
  Our very all, and we have tried and tried.
Their souls? One died when it had learned to live;
  The other did not live until it died.

SATTERLEE REFORMS

By Macdonald Drake

SATTERLEE, the playwright, loved his liquor. He looked on the wine (generic term for all alcohol) not only when it was red but when it was yellow, green, pink, white, amber, bistre, and purple. And in his leanings—referring to his predilections rather than to his attitude before the bar-rail—he was not alone; for Bryan, and Boland, and Kent, and Carew, authors all, kept him faithful company. Eleven of a morning, first drink time, found them lined compactly along the favored mahogany; and one o'clock of the next day tolled them disconsolately away from the benign atmosphere.

Bryan, and Boland, and Kent, and Carew had cut plug constitutions. Satterlee was rather of the bull durham consistency. It was a great life for the five; and year after year they followed it—until Satterlee weakened. He confessed it to himself; he was up against it. Mornings, he had difficulty in restraining the weeps; days, he shook and trembled like a seventh-rate movie picture; nights, he saw strange visions through even the most tightly closed eyes. And when the blot of the darkness of his room metamorphosed suddenly one night into the indubitable shape of a lavender billy-goat Satterlee decided that it was time to quit.

And quit he did. Quit cold.

Satterlee was off the stuff; and for good. Whereat numerous producers plucked up the hope that his new play might break the record of eight consecutive and delightfully consistent failures.

Returned from his cure, Satterlee sought again his old haunts. But the wine—whether red, yellow, pink, green, white, amber, bistre, or purple—could not profane his lips. The four sots—for so, in his superiority, he mentally termed them—hectored him on his sobriety; bartenders—low fellows—made coarse jests at the expense of the innocent vichy.

But Satterlee stayed sober.

So sober was he, indeed, that the fast burgeoning play promised to be almost bad enough to knock 'em out of their seats.

He led, of course, an existence not particularly cheerful. He tagged his bosom comrades like a forwarded tailor's bill. But he couldn't desert them. Liquor lost, there remained only the four faithful. Past days had seen him too busy to cultivate other acquaintances. So, from eleven until one, and then often until eleven again, Satterlee followed the throng, grimacing in his exalted temperance at their miserably maudlin humor, sharing their potage—and their bar checks.

Long nights he followed, endlessly, feebly fraternal, insufferably bored. Collapsed and unconscious, he ministered to their welfare tenderly, inserted them into taxicabs, and, later, extracted them from their clothing lest inadvertently they might wake the next morning and find their feet where their heads should have reclined. Often and often they begged him to be human, to touch just a drop of their seductive potions. But Satterlee was adamant.

"I have reformed—re-formed!" he would proclaim with all that grave grandiloquence native to the true acolyte of Æschuylus. "I have reformed!"

For years he had drunk, and, drinking, drowsed to awake refreshed. For weeks he abstained, and abstaining was

suffered no sleep. Daily he grew more wan, his face emaciated, his hands talons. Deep sunk in their sockets, his eyes glowed dull, but never lost the gleam of his determined rectitude. Night after night he followed his friends, succoring them in their sufferings, still faithful to the ideal of friendship.

Did Bryan go Jerseyward in a taxi it was Satterlee who stuck beside him; did Boland offend the law it was Satterlee who bailed him out; did Kent insist on a park bench as a suitable pew for the worship of a summer sunrise it was Satterlee who joined the vigil; did Carew, long thirsting, assail the outer portals as day broke, it was Satterlee who rose tremulously to welcome him. And they could never induce him to retrograde. Satterlee had reformed.

To Bryan, entering one morning through one of the practical doors of a great producer's office that magnate quoth:

"Satterlee's turned out a great play. Fine that he has reformed."

"Yes," acquiesced Bryan, rather more sombrely than was his wont; "but unfortunate that this morning—nervous debility—he is dead."

THE END

By Thyra Samter Winslow

I HAVE stopped loving you. For months I've hoped that I would. No longer do I want to bring your name and your little pet words for things into all my conversations. I do not scratch in every crowd for your face and see resemblances to you in half the people who pass me. I do not smile at little whimsical things that you have said or done. It is with difficulty that I can recall the expression of your eyes, the curve of your cheek. There is a great calm instead of mingled pain and happiness. I have stopped loving you. But you'll never know how much I wish you'd try to make me love you again.

AFTER a woman has been married ten years and married life has become irksome, her one fear is another woman. But when a man has been married ten years and married life has become irksome, his one hope is another man.

SOCIETY; a tacit organization in which we pretend we have no desires, organized to help us secure the means of satisfying them.

AN immoral man is one who considers every opportunity a temptation.

THE ROAD TO HELL

By Douglas Turney

RALPH BATTERS was a downy-cheeked, pure-hearted, innocent-minded young fellow of twenty-five when he grew tired of his father's plumbing shop in Oceanside and sought the city ways and advantages of Los Angeles.

He had his dreams of a wife and a home and little children to cuddle, just as every other modest boy has, although he never had told these dreams, even to his father, with whom he was beautifully frank and confiding in nearly everything else that had entered into his life.

His father had kept careful guard over the lad and had, in fulfillment of his paternal duty, had a long talk with Ralphie, as he lovingly called his son, and warned him against the pitfalls of existence that might rob him of his honor and make him an object of shame among the good, pure men and fathers of the world.

From the time the boy first learned to toddle, the father had drilled into his consciousness the direful results if he permitted himself to be led astray.

"If any strange woman speaks to you," the father pleaded, "run straight home to me. If she offers you candy, refuse it—I will buy you some. If she invites you to take a ride in her motor-car, rush away from her as if she were Satan herself. That you remember to do as I tell you is enough now. When you are old enough to understand, I will tell you why. And then you will thank me for it."

And surely enough, Ralphie did, when he reached the age of adolescence, thank his father for the counsel which had kept him still a pure boy who could honestly look forward to the time when the one woman in the world for him should choose him from the whole world for her husband.

But Oceanside was a small place, and waiting there for *the* woman—the as yet only dreamed-of woman for whom he was keeping soul and body pure—grew exceedingly tiresome. And so, when Ralph reached the age of twenty-five, and still the enchantress had not sought him out, his thoughts turned toward the city as her possible dwelling-place.

His modesty kept him from telling his father, a poor widower, his real reason for leaving his quiet Oceanside home and shop.

He only half admitted the reason to himself, and then only with the deepest, although it must be conceded, delicious blushes.

And so Ralph, fresh, unspoiled and good, went to the city.

Strictly following his worried father's advice—and that sage parent had given his son a final plain talk upon consequences, warned him of white slavers and expressed the fullest faith that the boy would retain his honor at all hazards—Ralph, immediately upon reaching La Grande station, inquired his way to the Y. M. C. A.

"I'll put you on the right car myself," volunteered the big policewoman of whom he had timidly and with downcast eyes inquired the way. "You're too pretty a boy to be coming to the city alone. What's your father thinking of, anyway, that he lets you run around all by yourself?"

"Oh, Ma'am, you mustn't say anything cross about my father," timor-

ously replied Ralph. "He's the dearest father a boy ever had."

"Well, I'm glad to see he's raised you up right," said the policewoman, giving Ralph a close scrutiny. "And say, lad, if you get into any trouble, just call on Officer McHinniny, meaning myself."

"Thank you, Ma'am, I'll not forget," murmured Ralph. "I'm very grateful to you, Ma'am, I'm sure. If my father were here, he'd thank you properly. If you ever go to Oceanside, he'd be pleased to thank you, if you'll just step into our plumbing shop. It's not far from the station. You just walk one block and turn to the—"

But the policewoman was busy telling the conductoress of the street car where to put Ralph off, and the car started with a jolt and a rumble which drowned the conclusion of the boy's cordial invitation.

Ralph was duly helped off the car at the right corner and without too much trouble found his way into the Y. M. C. A., where a fatherly old man showed him to a room, laid his simple toilet articles out on the dresser and later brought him a pot of tea.

Bright and early the next morning—that is, early, but not remarkably bright—Ralph was up and looking for a position.

Despite his lack of city experience, he was picked out of a large number of other applicants who sought work with a woman who conducted the largest plumbing establishment in the city. The proprietress picked him out herself and Ralph's rosy cheeks grew even more rosy under the long and openly admiring scrutiny she gave him.

And, although his work was nothing remarkable and other of her more jaded young men employees were often, to their intense anger and disgust, forced to correct the country boy's errors, Ralph's employer never found fault with him, but seemed to like him more and more as time passed and his errors multiplied.

For it was indeed hard for Ralph to do his best when Miss Quagmire, for that was his employer's name, kept her eyes upon him most of the time, and when in those eyes, he eventually and reluctantly confessed, he saw the look against which his dear old father had blushingly warned him.

In time, Ralph became a sort of secretary to Miss Quagmire, who thus kept him in her private office much of the day and who was thus equipped with the privacy which permitted her to give him various little hints upon improving his clothes and the way he wore them

Ralph followed her suggestions and gradually lost the extreme bucolic appearance which had marked him when Miss Quagmire picked him out of a score or more of youths eager to enter her employ, but he still retained his native purity of thought and speech and manner. This made him decidedly distinctive, which Miss Quagmire was not slow to observe, but, being a generaless among generalesses, she conducted her campaign so insidiously that Ralph realized only that she "liked him," as he phrased it to himself.

And he considered himself a fortunate youth indeed to have found such a considerate employer.

Considering Miss Quagmire, he asked himself, often, in the privacy of his room at the Y. M. C. A., how could his father have obtained his ideas about women?

One evening in the winter, when hurrying home from his work at the side of Miss Quagmire all day, a well-dressed, prosperous-appearing business woman, of decidedly the better type, followed him for two or three blocks, causing the boy to increase his speed until, with heart beating fast with fear, he fairly ran the last half block to the shelter of the Y. M. C. A.

The next day he blushingly and with downcast eyes told Miss Quagmire about his adventure and asked her advice.

"What cause did I give her for annoying me?" he inquired.

Miss Quagmire found it hard to believe that Ralph did not really know his own attractiveness and so, rather

than spoil him by telling him, she answered:

"Don't worry about it. She was only a coarse, bestial creature. And you must not judge all women by that one."

"Oh, I couldn't—after knowing you."

The words seemed actually to have burst from Ralph's lips, although he crimsoned immediately after speaking them.

"And always tell me when you are troubled in this way," continued Miss Quagmire, delighted inwardly at Ralph's evident belief in her as a righteous woman, "and I will put a stop to it if she ever does it again. If necessary, I'll give her one of the worst beatings-up she ever dreamed of."

Ralph was followed again and by the same rude business woman, too, who grew more active in her pursuit of the innocent country boy and tried again and again to stop him.

But Ralph, disliking the idea of making trouble for Miss Quagmire, although he secretly joyed in the very thought of her battling with another woman over an insult to him, never told his employer again of the decidedly unwelcome attentions of the stranger.

Gradually, Miss Quagmire became more and more attentive to Ralph, and the lad was forced to ask himself if his employer might really intend to make him her husband.

He thought of the luxury he would enjoy as the husband of this wealthy business woman and decided that if she asked him, he would accept her, if for no other reason than to afford his old father a happy home in his old age.

Miss Quagmire took Ralph out to lunch several times to quiet little restaurants she knew, where he would not be embarrassed, and where none of her women cronies were likely to be seen, and even made up little theatre and opera parties of two—herself and Ralph—for the pleasure of being with the boy and watching him enjoy for the first time the wonders of which he had merely read before.

Going home in a taxi one night, Miss Quagmire squeezed Ralph's hand, causing the youth to shrink, half-frightened, back into a corner.

But Miss Quagmire's impetuosity at last was aroused and she threw her arms about the boy and crushed him to her. He fought with all his strength and screamed at the top of his voice, but his cries and struggles were unheeded either by Miss Quagmire or by the woman driving the machine, who, incidentally, had been carefully chosen for that particular evening by Miss Quagmire.

And finally, exhausted, Ralph lay passive in the embrace of his employer, who pressed her lips to his again and again and softly voiced such words of endearment and admiration as "My pretty baby."

"You don't know much about love, do you, my pretty baby?" murmured Miss Quagmire, while she fondled his hand. "But, I'll teach you, my pretty Ralphie, my pretty baby Ralphie. We'll get a little flat somewhere, and you shan't have to ruin your health and your figure by working in a musty old plumbing shop any more. What do you say to that, my baby?"

Reassured, the youth asked, "You mean we'll be married?"

"Little innocent," whispered Miss Quagmire. "Who said anything about marriage? What has marriage to do with love? Don't you *love* me?"

"Oh, I do, I do love you," replied Ralph, in a low voice.

"Then kiss me."

Ralph raised his lips and Miss Quagmire reveled in the kiss he gave her.

"Then it's all settled," said Miss Quagmire, finally. "You needn't come to work in the morning, but just quietly pack up your things and I'll send a machine around for them and you tomorrow afternoon."

And so they rode almost to the Y. M. C. A., linked in each other's arms, the embrace ending only when Ralph insisted, for the good of his reputation, that the taxi stop half a block away and that he walk the remainder of the way.

Ralph hardly slept that night, so en-

raptured was he with his remembrances of the love Miss Quagmire had shown for him, and it was morning when he suddenly realized that his beloved had not actually answered his timid question about marriage after all.

"But she's an honorable woman and she couldn't mean anything else," he told himself and finally fell asleep.

He awoke to more happy remembrances and to blissful thoughts of the future in the flat he would share with his wife, and, gaily humming little snatches of love songs, he made his toilet, packed his simple wardrobe and waited for the automobile which was to bear him to his new life.

The car came and after he had ridden a short distance, it stopped and Miss Quagmire entered and sat down beside him, slily taking hold of his hand under cover of the robe. Ralph's heart sang.

"And now for the little flat," said Miss Quagmire. "There I can kiss you again and show you what love really is."

"But," ventured Ralph, timorously, "isn't—isn't—oughtn't—oughtn't—"

"What are you trying to say, my little baby?"

Ralph blushed.

"Isn't the first thing a wedding—our wedding?"

"It is not," promptly responded Miss Quagmire. "We love each other, don't we? Then why do you want to get married?"

"It's proper," meekly said Ralph. "Father always said it was the right thing to do."

"But your father's an old-fashioned man," said Miss Quagmire, who, seeing Ralph's hurt expression, hastily added, "charming, I'm sure he is, but not really nineteen-seventeenish in thought."

"But—"

"But what?"

"It seems to me that we'll just *have* to be married," persisted Ralph, his eyes filled with tears. "Of course, I love you, but—"

"Another but," snorted Miss Quagmire. "But supposing I won't marry you?"

"Then I can't go with you, much as I love you," answered the boy, bravely.

"Do you mean that?"

"Yes, Miss Quagmire, somehow I can't do anything else, somehow—"

"Then, it's all over. I wouldn't marry the best boy in the world."

"And I thought you really loved me?"

Miss Quagmire laughed.

"You're either a mighty good little actor," she said, "or you are maybe a little too innocent for me after all. Anyway, a woman has to be on the watch out these days, with the Mann Act and all of the other emotional laws going full swing. We'd better call it off, I guess. I suppose you won't want to come back to the office and I don't want you to, either, for you won't make a good plumber in a thousand years. I guess you know now, why I kept you on. But I'll give you a check to tide you over till you find another job and then we're quits."

It was really a generous offer for a woman like Miss Quagmire to make, but Ralph was already crawling out of the car, and when he and his telescope-bag stood on the pavement, he quavered:

"I won't take your filthy money! Thank God, I found you out in time! I'm still a good boy!"

Miss Quagmire, fearful of an unpleasant scene, although she knew the policewoman on the beat very well indeed, and had given her generous tips before then, told the chauffeur to speed away.

Ralph, alone and jobless again, found himself in a plight so terrible that life looked black indeed to him.

Urged by Miss Quagmire's evidently honorable intentions, he had spent all of his money for finery, so that he would not shame her when she took him out in public, and it was a small sum indeed which he had in the little purse he clutched so tightly in one trembling hand.

He felt that he couldn't go back to the Y. M. C. A. and so he found a

cheap room and began the dreary search for a job. Wiser than before, he understood the look in the eyes of several women who offered him work, but, although his need was great, he refused their offers of employment rather than be led again by his fatal beauty into another Quagmirish situation. And his money dwindled . . . dwindled. . . .

Finally, hungry, wretched, distraught with thought of his unpaid roomrent, the boy was wandering aimlessly along Spring street one evening when he passed a glittering café. Gay parties of screen people were entering and there came to him faintly the mingled music of a rag-time orchestra and the odors of well-cooked food.

He stopped, heedless of a coarse, but evidently wealthy woman — judging from her too large diamonds — who seemed keenly interested in him.

Ralph stepped weakly to the café-window and peeped in hungrily.

The woman came close beside him.

"Looks rather jolly inside, doesn't it?" volunteered the woman, giving him a close look.

Ralph shrank away.

"Don't get excited," said the woman, hurriedly. "I won't hurt you. I'm just going in to get a bite to eat. I hate to eat alone. I thought maybe you'd join me. It's a habit I have—inviting strangers to eat with me. You'll be doing me a favor."

Ralph had his own idea of what the woman's habits were.

But he was hungry.

He had stood it out as long as he could. Goodness versus hunger . . . hunger versus goodness . . . somehow, to-night, hunger was getting the better of the contest.

"Why, yes," he answered, "I guess I'll accept. We can introduce ourselves and not stay too late. . . ."

So he entered the café with the strange woman.

"I don't care, I don't care," the boy wildly assured himself, "I don't care if I *am* on the road to hell!"

WE OUTGROW LOVE

By W. L. D. Bell

WE outgrow love like fitted clothes,
And put it carefully in a drawer,
But in old-fashioned moods sometimes,
Regretfully, behind a door,
Try on again the clothes we wore.

NOT to love is to live in a house with blank walls. To love is to live in a beautiful garden. But to marry is to move into an institution with an inexorable keeper.

THE chief trouble with flappers nowadays is that most of them have been married and have had children.

THE EIGHT-DOLLAR CHEQUE

By Henry I. Myers

HARTLEY spread the cheque out on his desk, and regarded it thoughtfully. It would be easy to do. Merely to add a "y" and a zero, and eight dollars would become eighty. And who would be any the wiser? Bennett could never accuse him. For Bennett—it was an important point—Bennett was dead. Hartley winced uncomfortably at the thought. It was not a pleasant thing to raise a dead man's cheque.

He reasoned from every angle. The Hartleys had always been noted for their honesty. It would be a pity to break the tradition. And yet—there was the rent, and the butcher, and three mouths to feed, beside his own. Eighty dollars would be a welcome relief. After all, there was a higher morality: the morality of necessity. And Bennett *was* dead. Dead just one day, as if to make it easier.

Hartley raised the cheque. He had reasoned it all out, and as he now felt justified his hand did not tremble.

When it was finished, he leaned back and regarded his work with satisfaction. The zero was neat and round, and the "y," although somewhat cramped, very convincing. Without further hesitation, he took it to the bank, endorsed it, and presented it to the paying-teller.

"Eight tens," he said, and his voice was steady.

There was no turning back now, nor was there any wish to turn back. There was none of the last-minute struggle with his conscience that he had anticipated.

* * *

For some reason, there was an unwonted delay. Hartley began to feel a trifle nervous. Would they insist on his being identified? He recalled, with a breath of relief, that he knew one of the clerks. The man in question passed just then, and nodded to him pleasantly.

He impatiently drummed with his fingers on the little glass counter, and then suddenly stopped, as an uncomfortable thought occurred to him. Perhaps they had detected the fraud. The bare possibility terrified him, and he wiped his damp forehead. He *had* cramped the "y." Should he turn and run?

The doorman was regarding him—suspiciously, he thought. No, he would remain. That would be the wiser course. Remain, and deny everything.

He realized that the paying-teller was speaking to him. Hartley's head swam. He could not catch a single word. He murmured something about not having understood.

"I said," replied the paying-teller, somewhat impatiently, "that I am sorry I cannot cash this cheque for you. Mr. Bennett has only eight dollars to his account."

ROSEMARY

BEING FURTHER SELECTIONS FROM A ROMANTIC CORRESPONDENCE

By Owen Hatteras

I

Dear Bill:

BEING, as you are, adolescent, it was scarcely to be expected that you would ever have pored over the old *Standard* and *Vanity Fair,* but it does seem that Keppler's cartoons in *Puck* and the big-headed, tiny-bodied folk of F. M. Howarth would have been indelibly stamped upon your memory. And you recall with pride the Yellow Kid, but neglect the button craze that flourished as a more or less direct result of those cartoons.

But, bless me! You have a memory to be ashamed of, not to boast of; why, you've forgotten half the best things entirely! What about the drug store, just as popular as Holzapfel's smoke shop ever dared to be, with the big Diamond Dyes card hanging on the partition behind which they made up the prescriptions? Remember the red and blue bottles in the window, and the tiny gas-jets that lighted them at night? And the soda fountain painted all white to look like marble and in the centre a spray of carbonated water spouting up continuously under a glass dome?

You recall those things now, eh? Well, I'll try you again: Did you ever scan a Book of Views of the World's Columbian Exposition and point out the Administration Building and say, "Oh, I remember that"? Did you ever wear a short tan topcoat that struck you just below the hips? Or trousers so tight you couldn't hitch them up when you sat down? Or a black suit with a white vest? And do you remember when every sport wore patent-leather shoes every day and Sunday, too? And either a Windsor tie or an Ascot, unless he affected one of those new stocks?

He parted his hair in the middle, too, and plastered it down with military brushes and covered it with a straw hat as big around as a bicycle wheel. But with all this the chances were that he wore gold-buckled suspenders over his Jaeger's underwear and, if you will, his stiff-bosomed shirt.

But all those are easy ones. Why did you forget Regina music-boxes? And mackintoshes? And human-hair watch-chains? And eleven-bladed pocketknives? Why, oh, why, didn't you think of Mazie Follette? Or Sol Smith Russell? Or Helena Mora? Or the Barrison Sisters? Or Drina De Wolf? Or Ed. Delahanty? Or Jake Kilrain? Or the Wilbur Opera Company? Or "I Guess I'll Have to Telephone My Baby"? Or "Every Race Has a Flag But The Coon"? Or *The White Elephant Magazine?* Or the thin gold chains attached to nose glasses? Or Tourgee's "Fool's Errand"? Or Gilmore's Band? Or the Planchette? Or Charlie Mitchell?

Why, you don't even remember the night the gallery at the Opera House sank six inches with the crowd that gathered to see Jas. J. Corbett as "Gentleman Jim"! A mere infant you must be, else you would surely have mentioned Maude S., or the Gloire de Dijon Rose, or Crokinole, or lightning-rods.

I don't believe, either, that you ever danced a quadrille or lancers. You

don't remember your first Moxie, which you bought with a free ticket and the taste of which you didn't like. You evidently never saw a painted tambourine. And as for "Good-bye, Dolly Gray," or "Whistling Rufus," or "All Coons Look Alike to Me," you never heard any of them.

And what about Yale's "Twelve Temptations"? Better than the "Devil's Auction," if you had ever seen it. And I know you've never been in a First Chance and Last Chance saloon, or in the Buckingham in Louisville or the Standard in St. Louis. You never read "Beulah" and "St. Elmo," much less Frank Merriwell.

Did you hear your first phonograph by dropping a nickel in a slot and putting rubber tubes to your ears? And was your first moving picture shown in the same manner, minus the tubes? I doubt it. And how about the first Panama hat you ever heard of? Did or did you not believe it cost $500 and could pass unharmed through a finger ring?

Why continue? Your juvenility has been proven beyond the shadow of a doubt, but just to clinch it, answer me yea to these questions if you dare: Have you ever played Authors? Or worn a ring on your cravat?

Awaiting yr., etc.,

GUS.

II

Dear Gus:

. . . But what of Vesta Tilley? And Villa Knox? And Mme. Steinheil? And Aunt Jemima's Pancakes? And Coal-Oil Johnny? And Sockless Jerry Simpson? . . . I am getting to be an old man, my boy. I remember the time when Coxey's Army came down the Chesapeake & Ohio Towpath. . . .

The other day I dropped into a little two-cent toy and candy store near a schoolhouse and asked for some peewees. Think of it: the woman said they were no longer made! How the devil can the boys of to-day play marbles without peewees? I asked her, and she told me that they now used boogies. I ordered up some of these boogies, and they almost made me weep: brown, dirty-looking spheroids, no two of them quite the same size. No wonder there is so little marble-playing in late years! . . . But the candy woman still had a drawer full of agates—aggies, we used to call them. I bought half a dozen for old-time's sake, and am still carrying them in my pocket.

Do you remember when every self-respecting boy had a whip-top in spring and spun it by lashing it with a home-made whip? I used to make the lash of my whip by stealing a towel from the cook and cutting it into long strips. These I nailed to half a length of broom-handle. A fine top whip—and very handy for defending the top. Any boy who happened along was free to grab it unless it had a "license" burned into it. This "license" was made with a piece of red-hot wire, and the wire was got red-hot by thrusting it between the front grates of the kitchen stove. That was long before gas stoves came in. The cook always burned coal. As I remember it, a top that was spun with a cord didn't need any "license." Or am I forgetting?

And did you ever make a baseball glove out of one of your father's old kid gloves, with an old sock stuck inside for padding? Did you ever chew Colgan's Taffy Tulu gum? And, tell me, my boy, do you remember the shavings of licorice root that used to be put up in little cheesecloth sacks in imitation of chewing-tobacco bags and sold in the candy store for a penny? Did you ever chew the stuff, pretending it was Fine Cut, and expectorate promiscuously in manly imitation of your Uncle Al?

Yours,

BILL.

ON A NIGHT IN APRIL

By Ellis Gale

I

SHE undressed the heavy, inert figure on the bed with swift precision. There had been a time when grief made this task a slow, laborious one, interrupted often by her tears and sobs. But with long experience had come stoic silence, as well as deftness. She had hastened to prepare her husband's bed for the night, after one glance at him as he entered the apartment. He was more hopelessly drunk than usual; but she reflected grimly that her work was easier than when he was able to resist her efforts to make him comfortable.

When she had finished, she covered him carefully, switched off the light and opened the windows. She stood in the doorway for a moment, listening to his hard, raucous breathing; suddenly there was a throaty, strangling sound that made her heart leap with the fear that he would not regain his breath.

She ran to the bed, shook him frantically; with difficulty dragged him up and onto his side. Then she brought water, putting it by teaspoonfuls between his lips. She took the pillows from her own bed and wedged them about him so that he might not turn again. What if he should die, some time—like that—when she was alone in the room with him! She shuddered at the thought. In terrified imagination she saw herself in the hands of the police, defenseless, accused of his murder.

She went into the little library and sat down, giving herself up for a few minutes to the despairing numbness of body and soul that always possessed her at these times. The ordeal of caring for him had taken all her strength; her breath came in the long, gasping sighs of exhaustion. But she had no time to yield to apathy. She had promised her mother that they would pass the evening with her. Now she must telephone some flimsy excuse, as she so often had to do. She walked thoughtfully to the telephone; it was after she had picked up the receiver that she decided to call a taxicab instead of her mother's number.

Glad of an excuse for action, she changed quickly into street clothes; put on her hat, turned on the light in the bedroom for one more look at her husband in his drunken stupor, and was ready to run downstairs when the taxi stopped before the door. Driving through the park, she succeeded in relaxing a little, as she drew her lungs full of the sweet April night.

Her mother accepted without question her murmured excuse that her husband had been detained in town; she had been able to conceal his lapses, so far as her own family was concerned. She contrived somehow to take her part in the light laughter and chatter about her—to get through the evening without letting anyone suspect the load that lay on her heart. But she watched the clock furtively, that she might escape at as early an hour as she could without causing comment.

"Why, Anita! How will you get home?" questioned her mother, anxiously, seeing no cab at the door.

"I thought I'd walk to the taxi station. It isn't far, you know," she answered, keeping her voice steady with difficulty.

And with a hurried good night she walked away rapidly.

She felt that she could not have endured it another minute; certainly not the quarter-hour it would have taken to bring a taxicab to her mother's house.

It was cooler now; the sky was clear, and the stars shone with a hard, wintry brilliance; but she could still feel the softness of spring in the air. She liked the walk, with the fresh breeze blowing in her face. She resolved to walk all the way home: by making a detour of the park she could keep to well-lighted streets, and the fine evening had lured so many people out of doors that she felt quite secure.

She was lonely; but anything was better than the kind of loneliness that awaited her at home. As she walked up the street that skirted the park, a tide of youth and love flowed by her. Sometimes she caught a boyish murmur, followed by a girlish, self-conscious giggle; other couples walked in blissful silence. Her throat swelled and her eyes smarted as she remembered that not so many years ago she had been young like that, and that sodden creature she had left at home, slim and bright of eye; but all the hopes of the springtime of her life had fallen prey to disillusionment.

She left the park behind her, and came into a section of the street that glittered with cafés, cabarets, motion-picture theaters and chop-suey houses. Here springtime meant only increased opportunity for the pursuit of pleasure. She quickened her step, a little embarrassed at finding herself alone in the midst of the noisy, laughing crowds. From open doors came the sound of dance music, the click of billiard balls, the crash of pins in bowling alleys, the clink of glasses, the jingle of silver and china—all the sounds attendant on gayety and good fellowship, real or assumed.

A red-faced man brushed close by her with a tentative,

"Hello, girlie! All alone this evening?"

She shrank away from him and lowered her gaze, wishing she had taken a taxi, after all.

In a moment she looked up again, startled by the sound of her own name, spoken in a familiar voice.

"Why, good evening, Mrs. Mills!"

Standing before her, hat in hand, pleasure and astonishment mingling in his expression, was a man she knew very well; a man who, with his wife, had come to her apartment many evenings for bridge. At her faint response to his greeting, and the utter weariness in her eyes, he became suddenly grave.

"Anything wrong?" he asked.

She shook her head.

"Nothing unusual. I've been down to mother's. I'd expected my husband to go with me—but he wasn't fit to go anywhere. I left him at home, asleep."

She did not try very hard to keep the bitterness out of her tone. This man knew something of her husband's habits, and it was a relief to speak frankly. She was tired of lies and hypocrisy: tired of pretenses that did not deceive anybody.

"I'm so sorry," he said, hurriedly. "It's a great pity—he's such a fine fellow when he doesn't do that."

She was silent.

"I've been knocking about by myself this evening, too," he went on. "I didn't have any dinner, I hated so to eat alone. I was just trying to get up courage to go in here and have a bite—but it's a lonesome business, when everybody around you is having such a good time. I wonder"—he looked at her doubtfully—"if I dare ask you to come with me?"

"Thank you," she answered simply. "I think I'd like it very much."

II

THEY turned to enter the restaurant before which they had been standing. It was an odd place; originally it had been a little roadhouse, the German tavern type of nearly half a century ago. The main building had been left intact with its quaint, old-fashioned woodwork and ornate fixtures; and to

it had been added a modern dancing hall, done in gray and silver, with soft rose-shaded lights. The wall between the old and the new was cut into a series of narrow arches, so that when they had chosen a little table farthest removed from the music and dancing they caught enticing glimpses of motion and color in the room beyond.

When he had ordered wine and something in a chafing-dish, he smiled across the table at her. One had to know him well to think him good-looking; his face was thin, and although he was still in his thirties deep lines showed in his cheeks and forehead, and his not overabundant dark hair was streaked with gray.

"I'm sorry about your husband," he said, thoughtfully. "Of course I've known for some time that things weren't easy for you."

Then a mischievous look came into his brown eyes. "Still, it's an ill wind that blows nobody good! You can't imagine how badly I wanted companionship tonight—and then to have such a piece of luck as meeting you!"

She only smiled in answer; but she was thinking that she was very lucky, too, not to have to go home for a little while.

After that he talked frivolous commonplaces to her, as if bent upon playing up to the situation and the place, and upon forgetfulness of reality for both of them.

They were left practically to themselves; the young people who flocked into the place pressed eagerly toward the dancing hall, with scarcely a glance at the quiet old room.

When the chafing-dish had been taken away, and the wine glasses filled again, they sat silent for a time, looking out through the arches.

The music stopped suddenly with a humorous twist that left the dancers laughing and clapping impatiently. When the orchestra had begun playing again, he spoke softly:

"Anita, haven't you ever suspected that I love you?"

She looked at him quickly, wondering whether this was comedy or melodrama. She could not detect signs of either in his expression.

"No." Her tone was as quiet as his had been. "I've never thought of such a thing."

"You wouldn't, of course. But I've thought of it—for the last three years. I've never known another woman like you, Anita. Do you realize that you are different from other women?"

The imp of mischief that danced in the bubbles in her glass found its reflection in her eyes. She thought all the men in the world must have said that same thing to all the women in the world.

"I'd forgotten it," she confessed demurely. "You see, it's been so long since anyone told me about it."

They both laughed then, relieving the tension that was beginning to be a bit disturbing. In a moment he was serious again.

"I oughtn't to have said anything, of course. I've nothing to offer you, even if you would accept it. My children—I shall never do anything to hurt their future, or their happiness, if I can help it."

"I know that," she answered.

He did not mention his wife. He did not need to. She had seen them together often enough, and had wondered many times at his patience and forbearance.

She looked out again at the gay throng in the room beyond, sitting now at tables about the dancing floor. She could see girls there not much younger than herself, carefree, untouched by disillusionment. It did not seem fair that, at thirty-two, she should be done forever with life and laughter and love. She was glad the man opposite her had not tried to probe her emotions. She was not in love with him, but she recognized that April and a man you liked very much might be a deceptive combination.

They dropped into commonplaces again, a little strained, to be sure. Then they sat silent for a time, looking now out through the arches at life

and youth, and now into each other's eyes at a life in which the world about them had no part. He leaned across the little table, his hands clenched, the veins in his forehead clearly visible.

"Anita!" he said. "Don't you think that two people situated as we are . . . ought to get just a little bit of happiness out of this world, if they can? Don't you think they're entitled to something?"

She met his eyes steadily, not pretending to misunderstand his meaning. Her words, when she spoke, came very slowly.

"If one has a temperament that permits it, yes; perhaps. Mine doesn't."

They sat there without saying anything more, until she became aware that lights were being put out, the crowd had thinned down to a few stragglers, and the musicians were packing up their instruments. All around them waiters were dragging chairs about noisily and piling them upon the tables.

She rose, aghast at the lateness of the hour, and in a moment they were out upon the street, now darkened and nearly deserted. An uncomfortable silence hovered between them as they walked the two or three blocks to her apartment. She knew that she ought to dismiss him at the street door, but she said nothing as he entered the building and followed her. The electric bulb on her landing had burned out, and save for a tiny ray from the floor above the hall outside her door was unlighted. There, in the semi-darkness, he took her in his arms; caution deserted her, leaving recklessness in complete possession as she responded to his kisses.

"Anita!" he whispered. "Let me come in—just for a little while. He'll never know—it will be hours before he wakes up!"

"I'm afraid!" she whispered back, trembling.

"Please, Anita!"

She thought for a moment.

"Go now," she said, so low that he could just catch the words. "Stand across the street. If it's all right for you to come, I'll raise the shade at the middle window in the living-room. If I don't raise it—you'll know he's awake."

He kissed her once more.

"If I can't come back tonight, I'll telephone you tomorrow," he said; and went out noiselessly to await her signal.

III

HER hands were cold, and trembled so that she could scarcely unlock the door. Once within her own walls, her reaction was instantaneous and complete: the gleaming sword of romance and adventure had become a grotesque, leaden thing, its edge turned by the contact with hard actuality.

She tiptoed to the bedroom and switched on the light. Her husband was lying there, just as she had left him, the pillows stuffed around him. The air, liquor-laden in spite of the open windows, was foul and nauseous. His drunken snores were punctuated with an occasional moan, as physical discomfort began to penetrate his stupor. She tried not to look at his face: she knew too well how repellent it was.

She turned off the light, and went into the living-room, where she looked for a full minute at the middle window, with its drawn shade. Then she put out the light there, too, and went back through the hall to the guest-room, which she meant to occupy.

As she slipped into bed she reflected that at least she had something new to think about; she would not have believed it possible that anything could make her so indifferent to her husband's condition. Usually it meant hours of staring into the darkness, every nerve in her body twitching. Tonight she snuggled down, smiling drowsily as she thought of the man who had said he loved her.

She started up as she caught a sound she was trying vainly to shut out of her hearing—a long-drawn-out groan. She listened for a moment, until she heard the sharp, jerky breathing going on as before. A queer thing, conscience,

she thought—keeping a woman faithful to a loathsome object like that. Then pillowing her cheek in her palm, she turned her thoughts resolutely to her companion of the evening. Would he telephone her? . . . Would she see him again? . . . She wondered sleepily if . . . next time . . . next time . . . she would be strong enough to resist . . .

CONSCIENCE

By John Hamilton

WE were dressing for breakfast when I discovered it.

It was pink, and was tied with a saucy blue bow from which a bag of violet sachet and forget-me-nots with yellow centers dangled, and it lay conspicuously in the middle of my chiffonier.

It was scented and dainty, and frivolously feminine, and inexorably tempting—but unmistakably a woman's garter.

I endeavored to conceal it beneath a collar.

With horror I heard my wife's voice.

"Henry," she said, as she bent over her stocking. "My garter is on your chiffonier. Will you hand it to me, please?"

A TRYST

By David Morton

THERE is a land where to all races run,
A door through which all travelers pass from light,
Groping, at first, still blinded by the sun,
But lost at last in that all-quenching Night.
It is a land of Silence to the End,
Where there is naught to see or say or know,
And friend cares not if he be close to friend. . . . .
That is the darkened land where to I go.

Yet, when you come, still lovely, to that land,
Still crowned with all that radiance you wore,
One instant on the threshold pause and stand,
And I shall rise to lead you through the door. . . . .
One instant,—then, as night and day were one
When you were by, so in Oblivion.

THE FOOL AND THE POET

By Dorothy Taylor

THE King lay on his bed of state—recovering from a long illness. He felt very tired, and very weak, and being a King, very bored. Wishing to be amused he commanded that the old Court Jester and the new young poet be brought to his chamber. When they had come he ordered them both to stand at the window, and see which could gaze the farthest, and tell him what they saw.

The Fool spoke first: "So please your Majesty I see an ant that crawls on the uttermost edge of the earth, and in its mouth it holds a tiny grain of sand."

The King smiled, "How comes it, Fool, you see so far?"

"Sire," the Fool replied, "I have sharp eyes."

Then the King turned to the Poet and asked him what he saw. "Your Majesty," began the Poet, "I see the horizon lying like a silver thread about the world, and above that one pale white star that gleams like dew—and then beyond —a face I dare not gaze upon."

The King was silent. "Poet," he said at last, "how comes it that you see so far?"

"Sire," replied the poet, "I am blind."

MORNING SONG

By Margaret Langhorne

WE shall go out with a blithe song ready—
Glad of the path where fern grows deep,
Glad of the good white dust of the highroad,
Glad of the whippoorwill to croon us asleep.

There will be mists to make a roof over us,
With a splendour to eastward when the mists are withdrawn,
And there will be blackbirds in chorus to wake us,
Lest we should be blind to the dawn!

LOVE to a man at 25 is a lily-pond; at 35, it is Gethsemane; at 50, a horse-trough.

THE DOMINANT OBJECTION

By Paul Hervey Fox

AS she strolled among the rose-bushes of her walled garden, the incomparable Mrs. Mountford contemplated infinity with a slight, refined frown. Beneath a solemn, almost pompous oak, some empty wicker-chairs were seductive in the cool and quiet shade.

Mrs. Mountford sank into one with the leisurely grace that was common to her, and leaning forward, rested her chin in her palm, and stared meditatively at her big house, with its innumerable, glistening windows, its regiment of sloping roofs, and its fans of enfolding shrubbery. She drew a note from her girdle, and tapped it, with a rather ominous gentleness, against the arm of her chair.

It was, she reflected, diffuse and disordered; and the writer, in attempting to make clear a situation, had succeeded in making clear only his own condition.

The note was from Ronald, Mrs. Mountford's son. It held the history of his first scrape, a scrape that, if it was carried through, was likely to be his last.

Mrs. Mountford was a woman who had managed to develop her philosophy without losing her profile. Her gray hair was alluringly piled, her eyes were keen and proud and brightly blue, her lips a record of strength in reserve and a satiric humour. She had, when she liked, a dreadful smile of ice, and the gift of saying very simple things with a curious impressiveness.

In nothing save her own sensations had she faith; and the fact that her quite sincere amusement at the crowd's ideals should be construed by the crowd as a pose, added materially to that amusement. In brief, she had not allowed fairy-tales to influence her after childhood; and, unlike the mob, she did not commit the egregious blunder of expecting in others virtues which she, herself, did not possess. And because she saw that invariable laughter is, at least, less false than invariable sentiment, she was rendered the final compliment: she was called inhuman.

The late Mr. Mountford had been sufficiently considerate to die early, leaving behind him, as profits of his vague existence, the person of Ronald and a handsome estate. To Ronald, Mrs. Mountford had given what might possibly be called her devotion; the plans she wove for his future were entangled with the plans she wove for her own.

She had selected his university, and knowing that he had brains, trusted with a mother's untiring, unselfish love that he would grow as tired and as selfish as herself. She wanted him to cultivate his tastes, and return to her with a polite smile for those ardours of life which are generally taken seriously. Toil, ambition, the anodyne of domesticity, good works, and a Purpose, would, she prayed religiously, have no part in his religion.

Up to a certain point Ronald had gratified his mother's desire by the simple means of gratifying his own. His room in his college fraternity-house, after his freshman year, was like a perfect chord struck at random in the midst of a vaudeville song. Instead of football-posters, he purchased Japanese prints before they became one of the many short cuts to culture; and the *Yellow Books*, tall and interesting upon

his shelves, shed something of their own pale glow and faint aroma in the little room.

In short, Ronald passed successfully through the inceptive phases of the *dilettante;* and having early learned that the links of affection are welded from common faults as well as from common tastes, he had the wisdom to keep his vices for his friends, and his virtues for his enemies. He was inclined to think that perhaps that was why they were his enemies.

He was by no means unpopular in college, for he could say conventional things when he thought them required. And he was respected in spite of the fact that he never sought to be president of anything save his opinions, or captain of anything except his soul.

And now everything was promised a tumble. Ronald had taken his degree and was staying over in New York for a week with a friend. His mother purposed to travel with him on the Continent for the next two or three years—this was in the days before the war—to absorb delicately the soothing traditions of cathedral towns, to linger in Spain and Italy, and to breathe urbanely the atmosphere of the gardens of the world.

Mrs. Mountford glanced grimly down at Ronald's letter. In three pages of stumbling words the perfect son indicated that during his brief stay in town, he had encountered the perfect daughter-in-law. That she was in the pony ballet of a *revue* seemed, Mrs. Mountford thought, hardly a verification of the statement.

The name was Barbara Stuart; it told nothing save that the girl had had at least the taste not to be descended from some such fine old family as the St. Clairs. Mrs. Mountford evolved a picture of her as she sat there with tightened, inscrutable eyes; a vulgar, shrewd little snatch-penny, pouring flattery, tears, and temptations.

That Ronald should engage himself at this premature hour was dismal enough, but that he should make such a selection was—awful! Desire had inspirited him, overthrowing his careful Epicureanism, and making the pleasantest pictures of a life of sentimental, comfortable mediocrity, with slippers by a hearth fire, and two soft arms fastened forever about his neck.

Mrs. Mountford was pledged to the unclasping of those arms. To turn away with a humourous affection of disapproval as from a casual, youngman's amour was the simplest expedient; but here it was clearly impossible. Ronald had engaged himself; he was serious; his intentions were, so to speak, honorable. What a bore!

His mother ran down a slim scale of maneuvers. Should she be ironic and madden Ronald with sceptical laughter? Rail brokenly at his conduct and assume the correct air of martyred maternity? Plead with this—this Barbara Stuart, or frighten her off with threats? These things were vain and ridiculous. It is stupid to beat a colt that has two stables. Such methods would only drive Ronald into the arms that were prepared to console him, and drive him there with a consciousness that he was nobly paying for his ideal with a sacrifice. And nothing is so complimentary to an ideal as the fact that it is necessary to pay for it.

Suddenly, with her cool, thrusting mind, Mrs. Mountford perceived her course. She would invite the girl here, disarm her with tenderness, and then, point by point, draw out before Ronald's eyes, her vulgarity, her traits and tempers. Ronald had taste; Ronald would do the rest.

Smiling her dreadful smile, Mrs. Mountford rose and went towards the house to seek her writing-desk and answer her son's letter.

II

As THE car purred round the drive, and Ronald leapt eagerly out, Mrs. Mountford walked forward across the lawn with exaggerated calm. Privately stirred, she strove to control her heart by controlling her body.

The girl that stepped down with her

hand on Ronald's arm received a flicker of Mrs. Mountford's gently moving eyes; and in that instant was the subject of a meticulous summary. One thing was flatly apparent: she was not the usual chorus girl; she was even beautiful.

Over a finely carven little head like the head on a coin, plaited brown hair wound in shapely coils. The eyes were sombre wells of romance, and the lips had something of the hesitating curl of the petals of a rosebud. She was dressed rather simply, rather effectively. Her hat was provocative without being rakish.

Mrs. Mountford, with a twinge, was aware that she had underestimated the enemy. It was going to be somewhat difficult, she gathered, to make much of the thorns when the rose was so lovely.

"Ronald," she said, "will you see that Miss Stuart's bag is carried to her room? And ask Elsa to bring us tea and some little cakes out to the oak. It will be pleasant there, I think. . . . This way, my dear."

Mrs. Mountford, looking as sweetly old-fashioned as she dared, sat opposite her potential daughter-in-law in the alluring shade, and her mind revolved swiftly upon many considerations.

". . . So startling," she murmured, in her soft, low voice. "My dear Miss Stuart, if it wasn't that I knew Ronald, I would have been, I'm afraid, a little troubled by his sudden letter. But knowing him, I realized how nice, how very nice, you must be. And you are!"

"That is good of you."

The quiet, simple sentence, poised but unaffected, was disappointing. Mrs. Mountford, probing with cold, blue eyes, wondered a little frantically whether she would be able to discern and uncover the flaws she sought.

"You've only known each other a week?" she asked. "It's romantic! And Ronald, I suppose, wants to be married tomorrow?"

Miss Stuart laughed quietly. "I hardly know," she said. "But he is—so terribly clever. I'm not clever myself. I've always wanted to marry a clever man."

Mrs. Mountford lifted her eyebrows with some whimsicality. To her dismay she found that she could not help liking the—the hussy. She was at least pleasantly frank, and armed in a quite lovable simplicity. Ronald had taste, indeed; and, after all, he was a male, and hence couldn't be expected to see beneath the surface. So far Mrs. Mountford confessed that she, herself, had failed to put her finger upon some dominant objection.

"You're quite wrong about yourself," she said; "it takes cleverness to appreciate cleverness. . . . And I'm going to call you Barbara, if you'll let me."

Ronald, having executed his commissions, made his appearance, and presently the dainty clatter of tea-cups blended with the light, agreeable voices. Half an hour before dinner Ronald and Barbara returned to the house, but Mrs. Mountford sat on alone, nursing her thoughts.

She was sorry to pit her talents against this charming child, but, then, the girl was impossible. Not without instinctive refinement, she nevertheless lacked the intangible stamp of breeding. She was a dweller in a meretricious world, and she had to be, perforce, her own family. And there was more hidden, Mrs. Mountford felt sure. She was hardly the flaring little soul she had visualized; but she was an actress, and, it might be, was playing an elaborate part even now.

Well, she thought she knew how to bring her character into a white glare of revealment. She would stake everything on one tremendous test. It should take place on the morrow.

A bee boomed sulkily through the heavy air, and thin, ravelled clouds streamed through the west with their dull fires. Mrs. Mountford moved slowly towards the house, and as she did so, Ronald, looking very tall and pale, stepped out to meet her, a cigarette between his fingers.

How unlike him was this ordinary

situation, she thought; he was as sensitive as a cat in picking out safe ground. Was it really the Ronald she knew, or had he, by some unexpected throwback, twisted off the precocity which she had so insidiously made a part of his nature?

"And so, my dear boy, you're going to be married! Well, I'm glad you've chosen as you have. If you must settle down, you are wise to settle down with that dear girl. I shall be all right. I'll go abroad as I planned. And you, of course, will live in New York."

He nodded with a twinkle of perplexity on his forehead. He was, quite properly, a trifle afraid of his mother; and she was striving to reconcile her attitude with his knowledge of her individuality.

"I'll have to write to Mr. Pritchard," she went on smoothly, "and see if he can get you something to do. You have only two thousand a year of your own, you know, and Barbara can hardly support you in the style to which you have been accustomed on that. However, it will give you a little backing, a touch of confidence in any case."

"But—" he began sharply.

"Ronnie, you mustn't ask me to make you an allowance! I shall be fearfully extravagant in Europe. Surely I do enough when I relinquish a cherished dream—a dream of your being with me. The fact that I exercise self-restraint and resign myself to the inevitable, no doubt hides the extent to which I had cherished it. And . . . idleness and marriage aren't friendly partners. For a man of the world, a bachelor, an observer, a traveller, I think an income all very well and fitting; but a married man must have an occupation or grow soft. I don't want you to grow soft . . . Ronnie."

Ronald looked rather more than annoyed, but his mother had the disappointment of seeing his eyes brighten with dreams, his chin harden with resolve, as Barbara came down to dinner.

To her amazement, she perceived that the latter had not aggravated her charms with make-up. That struck her, at the least, as rather vulgarly refined. Her manners, too, were distinctly presentable. Mrs. Mountford was grieved to find that she did not eat peas with a knife. What were chorus-girls coming to, anyway?

That Ronald would tell her of the scant income, she had no doubt; not impelled by any sense of justice, of course, but from fear of a scene on a later occasion. Ronnie hated scenes, especially ones in which the accusations heaped upon him were true. Barbara would probably stage preliminary theatricalisms, and he would be coldly critical. It was a good stroke.

"I'm going to invite some people around here to a little dinner tomorrow night," said Mrs. Mountford, as she put down her coffee-cup. "For you two, of course. So you mustn't run off then."

Her eyes danced with their chilly, violet light. Her plan was a simple thing in which Barbara, with the genial assistance of alcohol, should be permitted to expose her mind and her habits, and with the vivid aid of the dawn to betray her face.

Ronald scanned his mother anxiously; but Barbara Stuart's serene, sad eyes held in their depths nothing of suspicion.

III

At four o'clock the next afternoon, Mrs. Mountford was forced to confess that the day so far had been a chronicle of failures. Ronald was infatuated, she saw, and even the girl appeared to divide her affection between his property and himself, and not love the former with that devoted singleness of adoration which characterizes your true *grande passion*.

Yet, Mrs. Mountford, though she realized that minor unpleasantnesses would be slurred over or forgiven, and that the only embryo of a definite break was in a *coup*, essayed to bring about trivial passages by trivial means.

She talked to Barbara of books, pictures, and music when Ronald was by.

He was a sensitive critic, and had himself probably been afraid to broach his delicately shaded appreciations before her. Yet to Mrs. Mountford's neatly contrived questions, Barbara had the wisdom to answer with other questions. No; she hadn't read George Moore's *Celibates,* nor Lafcadio Hearn's *Fantasies;* but what were they about, what were they like?

And, of course, Mrs. Mountford had forgotten.

Ronald repaired the defect by an exposition so long and involved, that his mother for a moment was inclined to doubt his parentage. She might have had a particularly bad dream, and awakened to find him, a foundling, by her bedside. Life is frequently so confusing.

Mrs. Mountford's next move was to trap the girl into portrayals of her tawdry friends.

"I know so few, and hardly anyone well. I'm afraid my few real friends are back in the little Western town where I was born."

But Mrs. Mountford, seeking to find out the scenes behind her life, indicated her further interest in her life behind the scenes. To her surprise the stories and the stage-patter really did interest her. And Barbara unconsciously marked herself as a spectator of her glittering Bohemia. A daisy among dandelions, she was in it, not of it.

Ronald made cheap humour on the subject. It was bad form, Mrs. Mountford thought, and hardly tactful. Barbara seemed a little hurt, and her dark eyes rested upon him in quiet inquiry.

Later, Mrs. Mountford suggested cards, and as Barbara did not play bridge, poker, the Esperanto of card-games, was named substitute. There were to be small stakes to give the game zest, like pepper on bacon, Mrs. Mountford said. She was secretly aware that if ten women lose money at cards, temper is shown out of that number by, say, eleven. And Mrs. Mountford could play like the devil.

That gentleman was, however, in the cards rather than in her playing. Mrs. Mountford won, but so did Barbara. It was Ronald who lost. She had never realized before how essentially feminine his nature was. He showed a silly irritation, and then went off and read in the corner like a sulky boy. Barbara stared at him quietly.

Mrs. Mountford, tired of unsuccess, sent off the pair in the motor. And before she went, Barbara had the indecency to mention that the news about the income and Mrs. Mountford's highly moral decision were in accord with her own desires.

At any rate, the evening would presently be here. Mrs. Mountford had 'phoned around the country in the morning, and secured the list that she required. It comprised chiefly those who drank hard when in the mood. Mrs. Mountford had decided to be the mood.

IV

TRUSTING that Barbara would make an overdisplay of herself like a milliner come into money, Mrs. Mountford had offered to lend her any and all of her jewels. She was pained by her courteous rejection of the offer.

The dinner was hilarious before the third course. Mrs. Mountford had a picked corps with her this night, who were, in a manner of speaking, likely to be absorbed in the liquor problem. Out of the tail of her eye she saw that Barbara was drinking very little. Setting it down to caution in the presence of semi-sobriety, Mrs. Mountford managed that her guests should early reach the revelry stage. After that elaborate dinner served to demi-reps at the possible cost of her position, there was dancing to the accompaniment of a local orchestra.

It was a wild night. By one o'clock the pace was furious. The Traynors fought publicly and then kissed like a couple in a burlesque. Thomas Carewe asked Barbara if she loved him, and wept in the third-act manner at her angry denial. Kendrick Lowell, who

seldom met his wife save at other people's dinners, was caught shamelessly flirting with her in a corner.

And, worst of all, Ronald grew tipsy to the degree described as glorious, and insisted on making speeches.

Mrs. Mountford, gazing about her with weary eyes at fat Bacchantes and maudlin Romeos, realized that she had gotten more than she had bargained. It would have been worth the price had she achieved her purpose, but Barbara and herself appeared to be the only sober folk present. It was tragic; the girl wouldn't drink.

It was four when the party broke up, for Mrs. Mountford stood by the programme she had promised her guests. What a wretched failure it had proven! In the spreading pallor of dawn the stars pricked the opaque film of the sky with dull silver. The thin chittering of sparrows was in the air, and beyond that there was a horrible, cruel silence as if everything in the world had died overnight, and was growing gradually putrescent in the haze of the summer air.

Mrs. Mountford had seen Barbara, in imagination, tripping and hiccoughing, revealing her secrets and her character with vacant laughter. She had seen Ronald in the first approaches of the light gaze with horror at her drawn and dishevelled face, at her red eyes and tumbled hair.

Reality made a bitter reversal. Ronald, mumbling unintelligibly to himself, stood swaying by the doorway as he ushered the jaded guests into the street. He slapped the door shut unsteadily and turned with a foolish grin. His mouth looked gross, and his lower lip sagged. His eyes were half-closed, and his face seemed to bulge out in curious irregularities. Mrs. Mountford wondered how she could have ever let him get like this. She ought to have warned him. And yet how could she have done so?

Ronald's head wavered on his shoulders. He gestured awkwardly towards Barbara, who stood there, looking marvelously fresh and lovely.

"'Lo, dearie!" said Ronald affectionately.

Barbara stared at him quietly.

V

Mrs. Mountford lay awake for a little while, thinking. She had failed to convict the girl of vulgarity, uncouth habit, or fast living. That she might possibly be all she appeared did not enter into Mrs. Mountford's head. The thing had become a fixed idea, and her attempt to discredit Barbara was transmuted from a desire to a mania. She must find out the big, basic weak point, the fundamental crudity, the dominant objection. She must—

Suddenly the memory of Proposal Island flashed into her mind. Why couldn't it serve equally well as Unproposal Island, if properly helped? With a throb of pleasure she felt that she had hit the right stratagem at last.

The next day—such as there was of it—may be characterized as a melancholy occasion. Ronald in the Bromo Seltzer hour was an unesthetic sight. He was sullen, and his movements were peculiarly jumpy. At times he scowled and silently twitched his lips. Barbara stared at him quietly.

Early on the day that followed Mrs. Mountford motored over with them to the inlet. For some miles this stretched like a crooked finger, and at the outer end a bleak island stood lonely in the sun, aloof from the far shores.

It was on this that Mrs. Mountford deposited her son and her guest, and then suddenly remembering the sandwiches she had carefully forgotten, stepped back into the launch that carried the party. She would return in an hour; they could amuse themselves in the meantime; it was careless of her to have forgotten; and they wouldn't mind waiting, would they?

As the launch puttered off with choleric snorts, Mrs. Mountford reclining in the stern, watched the labours of the engineer with an abstracted eye.

Suddenly there slid over her face her dreadful smile of ice.

. . . It was in the neighborhood of six o'clock that evening that she returned expectantly to Proposal Island. In the meantime she had lunched well with friends on the shore, and read drowsily, through the long afternoon.

It was a shame, she reflected, to deprive Ronald of his food. Poor boy, he was so fond of eating! But—it was necessary. Hunger stimulates, it is generally supposed, the appetite. Mrs. Mountford counted on its stimulating and bearing to the surface every imperfection that Barbara possessed.

She reached the beach and the two tired folk there with the proper air of flurry.

"Oh, if you knew what I've gone through," she cried, and added in apologetic fragments: "The launch broke down—all day out there—no oars—couldn't get here any sooner—you must be starving—I am sorry!"

Then as her eyes caught a clearer view of the couple, she felt intolerably depressed. It was plain that she had failed again! Ronald was growling and frowning, but his ideals had not suffered the blow for which his mother hoped. On the way home he was touchy and petulant, but he was also in love. Barbara stared at him quietly.

That evening Mrs. Mountford sat alone in her living-room and darkly pondered defeat. She heard the vague sound of the front door, and the rumble of the car, but she was not interested enough to inquire into the disturbance. Only someone going for the mail perhaps.

Presently Ronald joined her, and stood with his back to the bookshelves, silent and tired. Must she surrender him? Her policy had been a bungle. Must she let the chit have him? Never! Something would turn up, something must turn up to prevent that.

Elsa, a maid, verified the prophecy. She came forward to offer a note with an air of timidity into Ronald's hands.

Mrs. Mountford's heart jumped at the muffled groan that issued from her son's lips. He passed the letter to her with a frenzied gesture, his mouth moving inarticulately, his eyes a study of amazement and despair.

Dear Ronald:

I am very sorry, but when you receive this I shall have gone away. I am afraid I ought not to have got engaged to you in the first place, but I am glad that I had the opportunity in these last few days to know you more intimately.

This afternoon on the island you acted in a way that I can't very well forget. And your hunger was no excuse, nor did your attempt to patch things up make me overlook it. Perhaps I ought not to say these things, but I am so disappointed in you. You may be clever, but you seem to me to be coarse and fast and selfish. This afternoon was the last straw.

Please make my apologies to your charming mother whom I admire from the bottom of my heart.

Yours,

BARBARA STUART.

Mrs. Mountford revolved her head slowly in her son's direction, her mouth for once ungracefully agape. She was not acutely aware just then that in an odd way she had achieved her purpose. Nor was she conscious of the ironic fact that in attempting to disillusion Ronald, she had only succeeded in disillusioning Barbara. In the confusion of the moment, she forgot her philosophy sufficiently to be feminine.

"The self-seeking little creature! The common little gutter-child!" ejaculated Mrs. Mountford illogically in a passionate whisper.

Then it dawned on her, as she looked at Ronald, who sat with his head hunched miserably forward in his lap, that in a way she *had* succeeded in bringing to light at last the one dominant objection to the girl as her son's wife.

To Mrs. Mountford it occurred quite suddenly, that Barbara had proved her eminent unfitness to marry Ronald by her refusal to do so. . . .

MY MAID

By June Gibson

I SHALL discharge my maid.

* * *

She arranges my hair deftly, patting stray wisps into place with her soft fingers.

She always selects the correct jewels for the gown I am wearing.

She is careful that the screeching of the peacocks on the terrace does not disturb me in the morning.

Once when my Angora cat fell in the lake she rescued him.

* * *

She is madly in love with my husband.

Yesterday for the first time he left the house without kissing her.

She has become irritable.

Irritable persons annoy me. . . . .

I shall discharge my maid.

ALL

By Harold Cook

A LITTLE while ago it was
That Love was young and fair;
Enamoured was I of his mouth
And his shining hair.

Tonight he sits beside the fire,
Dumb, with naught to say.
His face is dark against the light,
And his hair is gray.

LOYALTY is something a woman sometimes gives a fool, but for which no sane man dares to hope.

HER CHAUFFEUR

By Robert McBlair

THE Ambassador's wife came down the Embassy steps and paused for a moment before Emile, who stood in immaculate livery by the limousine door, one hand respectfully at his cap.

"Out Connecticut Avenue and Q Street to the Chain Bridge, Emile; and then up that deserted road to where the violets were."

Surreptitiously, Emile regarded her as she stood, cool, young and lovely, beneath the *porte-cochère,* idly tightening the fingers of her white chamois gloves and gazing with abstraction in her calm gray eyes at the flaunting iris that bordered the lawn. The subtle perfume of her presence affected him like a wine; something in his breast swelled to the point of his suffocation; he dropped his eyes to the hem of her severe braided blue tailored suit lest they should wilfully seek out hers and betray him.

She moved. His heightened hearing bore in to his brain a hundred ineffable, intimate rustlings. She stepped into the car, disclosing more than was usual of her shapely, silk-clad ankle, and again he felt the blood throb in his temples. A glance at her face, though, assured him; she lay back against the cushions, beautiful, abstracted, discontented; and he jumped into his seat and started the motor, marveling that his features were such a mask.

They rolled slowly between the two lamp-posts supporting the gilded coronets and turned into Connecticut Avenue. Emile changed from low to second and then to high gear, and they sped off toward "the deserted road where the violets were."

He would never have a better chance than today, thought Emile. At other times his heart had failed him, he had taken it out in dreams. But there was a time for dreamings to end, a time for actualities, a time to put everything to the test. He leaned forward to look at himself in the reflector, and was satisfied with the set of determination to his waxed moustache, read irresistible passion in his dark, wide-apart brown eyes. He bore down upon the accelerator and they swept triumphantly up the hill and past the cement buffaloes that guarded the Q Street bridge.

"As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he," goes the saying; but, like many another old saying, it hardly fits in with the facts of the day. Rather, "As a man does, and leaves undone, and speaks, so is he," is the judgment of our time. What a topsy-turvy world this would be, indeed, if men were judged and punished according to the vagaries of their minds! The virile parson with the faded wife—what about him as he follows Miss Peekaboo Silk-Stocking on the car and sits beside her as she scans "Advice to the Lovelorn"? Is it a felony he contemplates behind the shield of his spectacles, or only a misdemeanor? Abduction, or merely to kiss those errant curls that cluster so bewitchingly on that marble neck? We may be sure it is one or the other.

No; the whole world would be in jail if we were punished for our thoughts. In one flash of a second a man stabs with the salad knife the waiter who has been keeping him waiting, or strangles his wife into silence with the cord on his bathrobe; and lo! the mood passes and the thought is flown, and he is whistling into his soup and dubbing the waiter a comical fellow, or has thought

of an apt retort and is prepared to pay for the bonnet that rude *mot* of his always costs him. It is what people don't know about us that saves us from the gallows.

But Emile was fast outstripping a merely thinking part. Premeditation was coloring his mind; and the thoughts that do not harm us are those that come and are gone, like a bird through a room. Why should he not dare? he asked himself. Was she not a woman? And—ambassador's wife, or princess, or charwoman—what one of them could resist the touch of hands and a throbbing voice and eyes that would not be denied?

More than this—had he not overheard her once refer laughingly to her "good-looking chauffeur"?

For all he knew, above the altar of her mind she hung his image, as he hung hers. Such things went in couples; and it were hard to believe that his soul, day after day, could be sending out waves of emotion and that she could not be affected. A palmist once had told him that he would be lucky in love, and only yesterday he had read in the Illustrated Sunday Supplement of a millionairess eloping with her footman.

Chauffeur though he was, and of a family of servants, the fact remained that the Ambassador's wife was angry with her husband; and that he, Emile, by virtue of his constant attendance, was already upon terms of spiritual intimacy with her. His intimacy was that which a spirit might feel for one of the living whom it had shadowed, whose glances and moods it had interpreted and whose conversations it had overheard—itself unseen and disregarded.

He knew to a shade of feeling how each gentleman or lady she drove with affected her.

He had overheard her express opinions that, if spread abroad, would have set capital society agog; would have brought confusion upon many a pompous dowager or moustachioed flirt; and would doubtless also have resulted in her husband's recall.

He knew how her face lit up whenever she met young D——; he knew (something that D—— would have given his soul to know) that it lit up like that for no one else; he was aware that the Ambassador, in the rush of war, was too busy to be attentive and that (patriot though she was) this she resented.

All these things Emile knew, and more. The life of her soul—or that part of her soul in play as she came down the steps of her own home to the motor, or picked up this one or that for a drive, or stood framed for a moment, beautiful in evening dress, in the brilliant light of a festive doorway, or chatted as she left some friend at the curb; or that part of her soul that was revealed to him in the gossip of her maid—the irritable days when neither her husband nor young D—— had noticed her; the happy, laughing days when D—— was to be a member of a party, or when the ambassador had been thoughtful or tender—these parts of her soul, let us say, he looked in upon as a man on the street looks into a lighted room. And by long looking he had come to smile when she smiled, to like whom she liked, to feel as she felt—or so he thought. And it did not strain his imagination to think that if he spoke and were ardent and she looked into his eyes, she would be kind.

They had swept by the reservoir, from which a glimpse of the Washington Monument might be had through the trees, had coasted down to the Georgetown Road, and now were rolling across Chain Bridge, where on either side flowed the Potomac through its green-decked palisades. Emile knew that she loved this view, and turned his head also, fancying that she would observe his action and feel the communion of soul.

In a moment they had rounded the curve, had paid the first toll on the Fairfax Court House Road, and were speeding along the Virginia turnpike. Another mile or so and they rolled slowly into the narrow clay road that now was so seldom used.

Honeysuckle clambered over the bordering rail fence, rows of old cedars (planted years ago by birds pausing on this same rail fence) lined their way like the entrance to an estate, a baby rabbit ran along ahead of them before turning into the ditch thicket, and a scarlet tanager flashed nearby and eyed them brightly from the heart of a shrub.

Presently the going became more difficult; the sun-dappled, cultivated fields on either hand gave way on the right to the northern slope of a hill thick with undergrowth, on the south to a fire-swept stubble of forest; and just beyond the next turn Emile brought the car to a stand, jumped down and opened the door.

Here, on the right, the telegraph companies had cut a wide swath up over the hill, and in the new gush of sunlight, by some forest miracle, clumps of wild violets had raised their little heads.

The Ambassador's wife stepped lightly down and passed him, and stood for a moment with her arms half raised above her head, drinking in (he imagined) the unutterable greenness that encompassed them—the thousands of shades of sunny yellow and yellow-green and green that rippled over the grass-grown swath on the hill or gleamed between the darker trunks of the trees. Then, carrying crumpled in one hand the white chamois gloves, she began making her way gracefully up the gradual slope, stooping now and again to pick violets.

Suddenly Emile began to tremble. There swept over him the feeling that his moment had come. Endeavoring first to control his nervousness, he walked up and down beside the car, first slowly and then rapidly, with gathering resolution. At last, feeling calmer, he stopped and regarded her. He had been hesitating longer than he had realized. She held a large bunch of violets. She had reached nearly the top of the small hill, and now was returning, the sunlight in her hair and narrowing her wonderful eyes, emphasizing the whiteness of her skin and the resolute if rounded contours of her features. She was beautiful—more than this, on this eminence, like a goddess, she was his heaven and hell, his hope of immortality, his complement on this earth, his—

The thoughts stopped and a film came over the brightness of the earth. He found himself stumbling over the turf, running madly up the incline to meet her.

First her feet came into the scope of his clouded vision, then the bottom of her skirt and the hand holding the violets. Suddenly he found himself—breathless, staring her face to face.

He could not read the expression in her wonderful gray eyes. It was partly fear—but a fear that was ready to dissolve, it seemed to him, at a sane explanation of his actions; and he saw behind it a gleam of laughter—or was it tenderness? Suddenly he became aware of the tremendous futility by any words to justify his intention. He was inarticulate, helpless for want of speech, and when he reached out his arms gropingly for her it was with the feeling of asking that pity for his dumbness be merged with the mercy that must be vouchsafed him now if victory were to come at all from his fault.

His hands fell upon her serge shoulders, and in the urgency of his grasp she stepped stiffly near him, neither resistant nor yielding. He put his arms about her and held her close; and her face, gone very pale, inclined limply into the hollow of his shoulders.

A transient terror touched him lightly. Had she fainted? Or was the heart beating against his but taking time to recover from the fright he had given it, and readjusting itself to the happy knowledge of his affection? He laid his cheek against her temple and felt a pulse beating there, strongly with an occasional flutter. And then, as if in answer to his question, her arms stole up and crept about his neck.

His heart began beating so fast as nearly to suffocate him. Putting a hand beneath her chin, he tilted her head back (that wonderful, queenly head, that reigned among the elect of na-

tions). He moved so that the sun was shielded from her eyes, and holding her thus he waited until their marvelous depths were unveiled to him and he read in them the message that he had so wanted to know. Slowly he bent down and met her lips.

Or at least that is what Emile thought. But in the seconds that his imagination had been functioning, the Ambassador's wife had strolled down to where he stood respectfully, hand at his cap, and had stepped into the car.

"Home, Emile," she said.

TWO LOVE SONGS

By Muna Lee

I

OUT of my turbulent days,
Out of gray grief and black wrong,
Out of the passion and stress,
I shall make me a song.

I shall make it light as a bird,
As free and as bold,
So it may tell me what youth was
When I have grown old.

II

I had believed love vast and tragic,
Surging music heard afar,
Something wraith-like, haunting, glamorous,
Dim and lofty as a star.

We have found out love together,
(All my foolish dreaming done)
Sturdy as the yellow daisies
Growing in the sun.

MAN likes pursuit, woman likes capture. That is why men make love to women, and that is why women marry men.

MARRIAGE is the reduction of a temptation into an opportunity.

ATTAINMENT

By Kingsley Moses

I

BESS HANRAHAN knew what she wanted. Of that there was no doubt. Nor was Bess ashamed to acknowledge her ambition to such of her friends as might have intelligence enough to understand what she was driving at.

All day Bess worked as mannequin at Palette's shop, just round the corner from the Avenue; in the evenings she occasionally allowed herself the luxury of a mild party. But never more than twice a week. For Bess' ambition was not to be thwarted by the folly of a few hours of pleasure. She was radiantly beautiful; and was well aware of the fact. She intended to remain beautiful until her purpose was fulfilled—and perhaps some time after that. She knew that nine hours' sleep, regular and nourishing food, and painstaking care of hair, of teeth and of hands were absolutely essential. And her life was as regular as an alarm clock's.

Not that she lacked opportunity. Women of Bess' beauty, even in New York, are rare as rubies in a rubbish heap. She was, indeed, as nearly perfect as human was ever made. Her hair was shining, soft ash-gold with glinting lights, and as fine spun as new silk threads. Her features were almost perfectly regular, saved from classic severity only by the very slightest tilt of the nose and an alluring fullness of the upper lip, exasperatingly tempting. Her skin, in texture almost translucent, revealed an evenly shaded rose color of flesh that not the most skilled artist could have laid on, and her eyes, under long, sweeping lashes at least three shades darker than her hair, were a deeper sapphire than an Italian mountain lake. Of her figure—well, that she was a mannequin at Palette's is description enough.

Opportunity, therefore, for pleasure came to her more often than the strokes of a ship's bell; but precious few invitations were accepted, and then only from men whom she had long known and sincerely liked. Theaters, but with no late suppers; cabarets, but with no frenzied dancing; weekly trips to Long Beach, Huntington, or up the Hudson; these were the limits of her dissipations.

All day long through the week, with the mechanical mince of the mannequin she swayed and willowed through Palette's show room arrayed like the orchids of the Amazon. The beige gabardine street frock was quickly stripped off to be succeeded by the black satin frock of afternoon with its alluring underfrock of chiffon over Chinese blue chiffon. Came then the morning frock of blue gingham collared with white *piqué*, and an emerald silk jersey with skirt of white flannel, marine blue serge embroidered with peacock silk, then a Royant cloak of black net, and again a straight-flowing, slim-lined creation in simple white *crêpe*.

But it was in the evening gowns that Bess Hanrahan showed herself to best advantage. Not tall, but with an easy and erect carriage, she lorded it over the other mannequins like a pheasant in a chicken run; and she was constantly in demand for Palette's most entrancing offerings. A green triumph in *faille*, *tulle* and ribbon; peplum edged with kolinsky with a *lamé* tissue for the

dress itself; black satin with silver *pailettes;* and white brocade silk, edged with silver lace, above all of these her lovely arms and shoulders rose in triumphant glory.

Wearing good clothes, she naturally developed an impeccable taste; and her own dresses, simple as they were, emphasized—if that were humanly possible—the daintily exquisite character of her beauty.

"She's too absolutely flawless to be real," Billy Prince, one of her many consistent followers, had once remarked. And the comment was just.

Nor was the girl a fool. She had kept her eyes open and watched the fortunes of her many friends in their alliances of love. It was her private opinion that most of the girls—girls who, like herself, had to be self-supporting—were ninnies. She had watched them marry, generally with unhappy consequences; and she had watched them contract less legal alliances, generally with more unhappy consequences.

But, idealist as she was, Bess Hanrahan refused to attribute the misadventures of her friends to Love itself. She knew, every conviction within her convinced, that Love was intrinsically precious, and to be appraised at high value. The mishaps of her friends were due to the individuals themselves, not to the institution of Love.

Analyzing, Bess concluded that the blame rested sometimes upon the woman, more often, much more often, upon the man. And yet, after all, it was the woman who chose. Why should she not choose well? Why marry, like one, a doddering old millionaire whose feebleness precluded any companionship save in limousine or church pew; like another, a fat Hebrew furrier whose knife play—table not bowie—confined his wife to the welcome only of cabarets and brash restaurants; like a third, a well-soaked young gentleman of excellent pedigree who was sober only on alternate Tuesdays of May and October.

Bess had seen them all; she had seen the girl who married a young floorwalker and now lived in an upper Bronx flat on about twenty a week; the girl who had married the nice young chap, son of a prominent but naturally pauperized clergyman, the switchboard-sprung wife of Dr. So-and-so's son, living on two thousand-odd a year, was not conspicuously welcome even in smart suburban society; the girl who married the young blood who, tiring of her in three months, had tucked her away in a pretty little cottage on the North Shore—and left her there; and a dozen girls who, marrying middle-age frankly for money, had gotten the money, and nothing more.

Why blame all this on Love? Certainly the right man could not be so very difficult of attainment. And Bess intended to find the right man—a man of good family, rich, young, and decent.

That was her ambition. Often she repeated the phrase to herself: "a man of good family, rich, young, and decent."

When her friends, and particularly young Billy Prince, whom she had known for years as a sincere companion, laughed at her and told her that it couldn't be done, she simply smiled. Couldn't be done? Wait and see.

II

YET as the years went by and twenty-one succeeded twenty, and two more years piled up on twenty-one, Bess Hanrahan suffered vague little doubts. She began to understand what Billy Prince had meant.

She met all conditions of men. She was wooed at least once a week. But almost always, while the wooer was rich and of good family, his youth was long past and his decency dimly dubious.

Occasionally, though not often, for she picked only the more expensive types of entertainment, she discovered a man with the other two numbers of the combination, young and decent, but with neither family nor money. And once—for more than a year she wondered if that time she had not erred—she was ardently pursued by a fine

young chap with the better part of a million. But he came from Tulsa, Oklahoma; and his name was Bosch. So at twenty-three, lovely as ever, she was still unmarried.

Several times she met men who, it seemed, had all the qualifications she sought. They were always interested in her; but at a certain point came the hitch. They took her on automobile trips, they lunched her sumptuously, they escorted her to the theatres and even to the opera, they gave nice, conventional supper parties at the cabarets of the best hotels, they were flatteringly and scrupulously attentive, but——

They never introduced her to their women friends.

A hundred times Bess had sat, twisting her napkin and staring the other way, while her escort rose to greet a handsomely gowned woman who had chanced by; a hundred times, meeting such men on the Avenue, she had been recognized only by a punctiliously respectful bow. The men, when with the women of their own set, never stopped to chat.

It hurt; hurt hard. Perhaps Billy Prince was right; though, for the life of her, Bess couldn't understand why it should be so. Raised in the environment to which she had been heir she could never fathom this puzzle; though she knew the fact too well.

Physically, she knew that she had everything in her favor; mentally, she had had a better education than a great many of those other women. She had finished High School with honors, she had had a year in Normal School, she had read widely and intelligently. Her father and mother had been most careful in her training; conventionally she knew what to do and what not to do.

True, there had never been any money in the little West Side apartment she called home; for the father, a lean, rather dreary, dried-up little old man, had never been able to get away from his bookkeeper's stool. But why should that matter? These other women did things and said things that were all wrong. Bess knew that, for stealthily she had watched them for more years than one. Why? Why? It was bitterly unjust.

And then she met Philip Allen.

III

WITHIN a week she found out that young Allen had everything she sought. In less time than that, perhaps, she knew that she loved him.

Son of a member of one of the largest banking houses in the Street, good-looking, strong, and just past his twenty-sixth birthday, Philip Allen already held one of the most important subordinate positions in the corporation that was the chief client of his father's house. Not rich in his own right—for his four thousand a year went a precious little way in meeting his many obligations—Philip could confidently look forward to the inheritance of a very substantial fortune. His father was devoted to him; he and his only sister would some time share the Allen millions.

And above all Philip Allen was decent. He drank a highball or so, he smoked a good many cigarettes, he danced whenever he got the chance; but he kept hold of himself. He knew his responsibility as the son of his father, and he was honestly proud to maintain that responsibility.

They had met at the Charity Ball.

Allen, it appears, had asked the man who escorted her, a nice old chap whose mission in life was to scatter jollity through half a dozen club lounges, for an introduction. One dance had been succeeded by several more. Allen had asked her to lunch with him in the Della Robbia two days later.

There, seated side by side on the comfortable wicker settles of the balcony, they had talked for three hours. She knew a good deal about him; he told her more, of his ambitions and his hopes, talking ingenuously about himself, as is the habit of nice, aspiring young chaps. She told him about herself, quite frankly; and he was sincerely interested.

Almost diffidently they arranged for other meetings.

That night, for the first time in her life, happiness kept her awake.

IV

THE month that followed was a glorious fantasy.

Philip and the girl were together as constantly as circumstances would permit. Almost every evening his racing roadster braked down in front of the rather shabby apartment where she lived. Long spins up the Hudson, out across Long Island, down through the Oranges; the soothing softness of the night air, propinquity, all were redolent of romance.

Almost every afternoon, at the Plaza, Delmonico's, the Vanderbilt, they had tea together; and, invariably, as the women of Allen's acquaintance passed, he insisted on introducing them. That, though formally polite, they were always cool, bothered Bess Hanrahan not in the least. That Philip should wish them to meet her: that was the splendid thing.

Then, one night, high up on the slope of Harbor Hill, Philip slowed the roadster to a halt. It was moonlight, and the bay lay far below them in misty, blue-gray dimness. Here and there through the gloom glimmered the riding-lights of the anchored yachts. Far out across the Sound a slow-moving radiance evidenced the passing of an excursion steamer.

Bess, warm-snuggled in a big white polo coat—one of her few luxuries—leaned happily against the shoulder beside her and whispered:

"Yes, Philip?"

"Bess," he said—then circling her with both his arms he kissed her upturned, eager lips.

"Yes, Philip?" she insisted.

"He"—the boy stammered painfully—"he—oh, Bess, hang it—he won't stand for it."

The girl laughed shortly, though with no bitterness,

"I didn't expect that he would, Philip."

"But why, Bess, why, for God's sake? Lord knows you're all that's sweet, and good, and lovely—"

Her finger across his lips hushed him.

"I didn't expect that he would, Phil, dearest. There is no use going into all the details."

"But—"

"That doesn't do any good, Phil."

Five minutes, perhaps, the man was silent.

Then: "Will you marry me anyhow, Bess?"

Gently, with stroking fingers, she patted his hand.

"Of course, Philip, dear," she said.

V

Two days later they were married very quietly in one of the chapels of Holy Trinity. Bess' father and mother and four or five of Philip's men friends were the only guests. They moved into a tiny apartment, hastily furnished, far up on Washington Heights.

There, through the long summer evenings, they sat on the deep window-seat looking out over the moonlit reaches of the wide-spreading river to the magnificent bulwarks of the Palisades beyond. Close in each other's arms, they watched the sliding lights of the water craft and breathed the sweet fragrance of paradise.

The girl, lulled in the dream of love, forgot even the mental triumph of her ideal's attainment.

That Allen, Senior, in a blind rage, had publicly disinherited his only son, made not the slightest difference to either of them.

"I have no claim on him," had been Philip's only comment. "He may disinherit me if he pleases. I can take care of you, sweet." And they had kissed and forgotten.

* * *

Two weeks. Philip Allen, jumping on the running-board of an open trolley car, was swept against an L pillar and thrown violently. . . . An old hag, sitting in the Abyss of Eternity, grinned and snipped a thread.

THE LONG VOYAGE HOME

A PLAY IN ONE ACT

By Eugene G. O'Neill

CHARACTERS

MAG, *a barmaid*
FAT JOE, *proprietor of the pub known as Fat Joe's*
NICK, *a crimp*
FREDA
KATE
DRISCOLL, COCKY, IVAN, OLSON — *Seamen off the British tramp steamer Glencairn*

[SCENE:—*The bar of a low dive on the London water front—a squalid, dingy room dimly lighted by kerosene lamps placed in brackets on the walls. On the left, the bar. In front of it, a door leading to a side room. On the right, tables with chairs around them. In the rear, a door leading to the street.*

A slovenly barmaid with a stupid face sodden with drink is mopping off the bar. Her arm moves back and forth mechanically and her eyes are half shut as if she were dozing on her feet. At the far end of the bar stands Fat Joe, the proprietor, a gross bulk of a man with an enormous stomach. His face is red and bloated, his little pig-gish eyes being almost concealed by rolls of fat. The thick fingers of his big hands are loaded with cheap rings and a gold watch chain of cable-like proportions stretches across his check waistcoat.

At one of the tables, front, a round-shouldered young fellow is sitting smoking a cigarette. His face is pasty, his mouth weak, his eyes shifting and cruel. He is dressed in a shabby suit which must have once been cheaply flashy, and wears a muffler and cap

It is about nine o'clock in the evening.]

JOE:

(*Yawning.*) Blimey if bizness ain't 'arf slow tonight. I donnow wot's 'appened. The place is like a bleedin' tomb. Where's all the sailor men, I'd like to know? (*Raising his voice.*) Ho, you Nick! (NICK *turns around listlessly.*) Wot's the name o' that wessel put in at the dock below jest arter noon?

NICK:

(*Laconically.*) Glencairn — f r o m Bewnezerry.

JOE:

Ain't the crew been paid orf yet?

NICK:

Paid orf this arternoon, they tole me. I 'opped on board of 'er an' seen 'em. 'Anded 'em some o' yer cards, I did.

They promised faithful they'd 'appen in tonight—them as whose time was done.

JOE:

Any two-year men to be paid orf?

NICK:

Four—three Britishers an' a square-'ead.

JOE:

(*Indignantly.*) An' yer popped orf an' left 'em? An' me a-payin' yer to 'elp an' bring 'em in 'ere.

NICK:

(*Grumblingly.*) Much you pays me! An' I ain't slingin' me 'ook abaht the 'ole bleedin' town fur now man. See?

JOE:

I ain't speakin' on'y fur meself. Down't I always give yer yer share, fair an' square, as man to man?

NICK:

(*With a sneer.*) Yus—b'cause you 'as to.

JOE:

'As to? Listen to 'im! There's many'd be 'appy to 'ave your berth, me man!

NICK:

Yus? Wot wiv the peelers li'ble to put me away in the bloody jail fur crimpin, an' all?

JOE:

(*Indignantly.*) We down't do no crimpin'.

NICK:

(*Sarcastically.*) Ho, now! Not arf!

JOE:

(*A bit embarrassed.*) Well, on'y a bit now an' agen when there ain't no reg'lar trade. (*To hide his confusion he turns to the barmaid angrily. She is still mopping off the bar, her chin on her breast, half-asleep.*) 'Ere, me gel, we've 'ad enough o' that. You been a-moppin', an' a-moppin', an' a-moppin' the blarsted bar fur a ole 'our. Op it aht o' this! You'd fair guv a bloke the shakes a-watchin' yer.

MAG:

(*Beginning to sniffle.*) 'Ow you do frighten me when you 'oller at me, Joe. I ain't a bad gel, I ain't. Gawd knows I tries to do me best fur you. (*She bursts into a tempest of sobs.*)

JOE:

(*Roughly.*) Stop yer grizzlin'! An' 'op it aht of 'ere!

NICK:

(*Chuckling.*) She's drunk, Joe. Been 'ittin' the gin, eh, Mag?

MAG:

(*Ceases crying at once and turns on him furiously.*) You little crab, you! Orter wear a muzzle, you ort! A-openin' of your ugly mouth to a 'onest woman what ain't never done you no 'arm. (*Commencing to sob again.*) H'abusin' me like a dawg cos I'm sick an' orf me oats, an' all.

JOE:

Orf yer go, me gel! Go hupstairs and 'ave a sleep. I'll wake yer if I wants yer. An' wake the two gels when yer goes hup. It's 'arpas' nine an' time as someone was a-comin' in, tell 'em. D'yer 'ear me?

MAG:

(*Stumbling around the bar to the door on left, sobbing.*) Yus, yus, I 'ears you. Gawd knows wot's goin' to 'appen to me, I'm that sick. Much you cares if I dies, down't you? (*She goes out.*)

JOE:

(*Still brooding over* NICK's *lack of diligence—after a pause.*) Four two-year men paid orf wiv their bloody pockets full o' sovereigns—an' yer lorst 'em! (*He shakes his head sorrowfully.*)

NICK:

(*Impatiently.*) Stow it! They promised faithful they'd come, I tells yer. They'll be walkin' in in arf a mo'. There's lots o' time yet. (*In a low voice.*) 'Ave yer got the drops? We might wanter use 'em?

JOE:

(*Taking a small bottle from behind the bar.*) Yus; 'ere it is.

NICK:

(*With satisfaction.*) Righto! (*His shifty eyes peer about the room searchingly. Then he beckons to* JOE, *who comes over to the table and sits down.*) Reason I arst yer about the drops was cause I seen the capt'n of the *Amindra* this afternoon.

JOE:

The *Amindra?* Wot ship is that?

NICK:

Bloody windjammer—skys'l yarder—full rigged—painted white—been layin' at the dock above 'ere fur a month. You knows 'er.

JOE:

Ho, yus. I knows now.

NICK:

The capt'n says as 'e wants a man special bad—ternight. They sails at daybreak termorrer.

JOE:

There's plenty o' 'ands lyin' abaht waitin' fur ships, I should fink.

NICK:

Not fur this ship, ole buck. The capt'n an' mate are bloody slave-drivers, an' they're bound down round the 'Orn. They 'arf starved the 'ands on the larst trip 'ere, an' noone'll dare ship on 'er. (*After a pause.*) I promised the capt'n faithful I'd get 'im one 'and ternight.

JOE:

(*Doubtfully.*) An' 'ow are yer goin' to git 'im?

NICK:

(*With a wink.*) I was thinkin' as one of 'em from the Glencairn'd do—them as was paid orf an' is comin' 'ere.

JOE:

(*With a grin.*) It'd be a good 'aul, that's the troof. (*Frowning.*) If they comes 'ere.

NICK:

They'll come, an' they'll all be rotten drunk, wait an' see. (*There is the noise of loud, boisterous singing from the street.*) Sounds like 'em, now. (*He opens the street door and looks out.*) Blimey if it ain't the four of 'em! (*Turning to Joe in triumph.*) Now, what d'yer say? They're lookin' for the place. I'll go aht an' tell 'em.

[*He goes out.* JOE *gets into position behind the bar, assuming his most oily smile. A moment later the door is opened, admitting* DRISCOLL, COCKY, OLSON *and* IVAN. DRISCOLL *is a tall, powerful Irishman,* COCKY *a wizened runt of a man with a straggling gray mustache,* IVAN *a hulking oaf of a peasant,* OLSON *a stocky, middle-aged Swede with round, childish blue eyes. The first three are all very drunk, especially* IVAN, *who is managing his legs with difficulty.* OLSON *is perfectly sober. All are dressed in their ill-fitting shore clothes and look very uncomfortable. Driscoll has unbuttoned his stiff collar and its ends stick out sideways. He has lost his tie.* NICK *slinks into the room after them and sits down at a table in rear. The seamen come to the table, front.*]

JOE:

(*With affected heartiness.*) Ship ahoy, mates! 'Appy to see yer 'ome safe an' sound.

DRISCOLL:

(*Turns round, swaying a bit, and peers at him across the bar.*) So ut's you, is ut? (*He looks about the place with an air of recognition.*) An' the same rat's-hole, sure enough. I rimimber foive or six years back 'twas here I was sthripped av me last shillin' whin I was aslape. (*With sudden fury.*) God stiffin ye, come none av your dog's thricks on me this trip or I'll— (*He shakes his fist at* JOE.)

JOE:

(*Hastily interrupting.*) Yer must be mistaiken. This is a 'onest place, this is.

COCKY:

(*Derisively.*) Ho, yus! An' you're a angel, I s'pose?

IVAN:

(*Vaguely taking off his derby hat and putting it on again—plaintively.* I don' li-ike dis place.

DRISCOLL:

(*Going over to the bar—as genial as he was furious a moment before.*) Well, no matther, 'tis all past an' gone an' forgot. I'm not the man to be holdin' harrd feelin's on me first night ashore, an' me dhrunk as a lord." (*He holds out his hand which* JOE *takes very gingerly.*) We'll all be havin' a dhrink, I'm thinkin'. Whiskey for the three av us—*Irish* whiskey!

COCKY:

(*Mockingly.*) An' a glarse o' ginger beer fur our blarsted love-child 'ere. (*He jerks his thumb at Olson.*)

OLSON:

(*With a good-natured grin.*) I bane a good boy dis night, for one time.

DRISCOLL:

(*Bellowing, and pointing to* NICK *as* JOE *brings the drinks to the table.*) An' see what that crimpin' son av a crimp'll be wantin'—an' have your own pleasure. (*He pulls a sovereign out of his pocket and slams it on the bar.*)

NICK:

Guv me a pint o' beer, Joe. (JOE *draws the beer and takes it down to the far end of the bar.* NICK *comes over to get it and* JOE *gives him a significant wink and nods toward the door on the left.* NICK *signals back that he understands.*)

COCKY:

(*Drink in hand—impatiently.*) I'm that dry! (*Lifting his glass to* DRISCOLL.) Cheero, ole dear, cheero!

DRISCOLL:

(*Pocketing his change without looking at it.*) A toast for ye: Hell roast that divil av a bo'sun! (*He drinks.*)

COCKY:

Righto! (*He drains his glass.*)

IVAN:

(*Half-asleep.*) Dot's gude. (*He tosses down his drink in one gulp.* OLSON *sips his ginger ale.* NICK *takes a swallow of his beer and then comes round the bar and goes out the door on left.*)

COCKY:

(*Producing a sovereign.*) Ho there, you Fatty! Guv us another!

JOE:

The saime, mates?

COCKY:

Yus.

DRISCOLL:

No, ye scut! I'll be havin' a pint av beer. I'm dhry as a loime kiln.

IVAN:

(*Suddenly getting to his feet in a befuddled manner and nearly upsetting the table.*) I don' li-ike dis place! I wan' see girls—plenty girls. (*Pathetically.*) I don't li-ike dis place. I wan' dance with girl.

DRISCOLL:

(*Pushing him back on his chair with a thud.*) Shut up, ye Rooshan baboon! A foine Romeo you'd make in your condishun. (IVAN *blubbers some incoherent protest—then suddenly falls asleep.*)

JOE:

(*Bringing the drinks—looks at* OLSON.) An' you, matey?

OLSON:

(*Shaking his head.*) Noting dis time, thank you.

COCKY:

(*Mockingly.*) A-saivin' of 'is money, 'e is! Goin' back to 'ome an' mother. Goin' to buy a bloomin' farm an' punch the blarsted dirt, that's wot 'e is! (*Spitting disgustedly.*) There's a funny bird of a sailor man for yer, Gawd blimey!

OLSON:

(*Wearing the same good-natured*

grin.) Yust what I like, Cocky. I wus on farm long time when I wus kid.

DRISCOLL:

Lave him alone, ye insect! 'Tis a foine sight to see a man wid some sense in his head instead av a fool the loike av us. I only wisht I'd a mother alive to call me own. I'd not be dhrunk in this divil's hole this minute, maybe.

COCKY:

(*Commencing to weep dolorously.*) Ow, down't talk, Drisc! I can't bear to 'ear you. I ain't never 'ad no mother, I ain't—

DRISCOLL:

Shut up, ye ape, an' don't be makin' that squealin'. If ye cud see your ugly face, wid the big red nose av ye all screwed up in a knot, ye'd never shed a tear the rist av your loife. (*Roaring into song.*) We ar-re the byes av We-e-exford who fought wid hearrt an' hand! (*Speaking.*) To hell wid Ulster! (*He drinks and the others follow his example.*) An' I'll strip to any man in the city av London won' dhrink to that toast. (*He glares truculently at* JOE *who immediately downs his beer.* NICK *enters again from the door on the left and comes up to* JOE *and whispers in his ear. The latter nods with satisfaction.*)

DRISCOLL:

(*Glowering at them.*) What divil's thrick are ye up to now, the two av ye? (*He flourishes a brawny fist.*) Play fair wid us or ye deal wid me!

JOE:

(*Hastily.*) No trick, shipmate! May Gawd kill me if that ain't troof!

NICK:

(*Indicating* IVAN, *who is snoring.*) On'y your mate there was arskin' fur gels an' I thorght as 'ow yer'd like 'em to come dawhn and 'ave a drink wiv yer.

JOE:

Pretty, 'olesome gels they be, ain't they, Nick?

NICK:

Yus.

COCKY:

R! I knows the gels you 'as, not arf! They'd fair blind yer, they're that 'omely. None of yer bloomin' gels fur me, ole Fatty. Me an' Drisc knows a place, down't we, Drisc?

DRISCOLL:

Divil a lie, we do. An' we'll be afther goin' there in a minute. There's music there an' a bit av a dance to liven a man.

JOE:

Nick, 'ere, can play yer a tune, can't yer, Nick?

NICK:

Yus.

JOE:

An' yer can 'ave a dance in the side room 'ere.

DRISCOLL:

Hurroo! Now you're talkin' (*The two women,* FREDA *and* KATE, *enter from the left.* FREDA *is a little, sallow-faced blonde.* KATE *is stout and dark.*)

COCKY:

(*In a loud aside to* DRISCOLL.) Blimey, look at 'em! Ain't they 'orrible? (*The women come forward to the table wearing their best set smiles.*)

FREDA:

(*In a raspy voice.*) 'Ullo, mates.

KATE:

'Ad a good voyage?

DRISCOLL:

Rotten; but no matther. Welcome, as the sayin' is, an' sit down, an' what'll ye be takin' for your thirst? (*To* KATE.) You'll be sittin' by me, darlin'—what's your name?

KATE:

(*With a stupid grin.*) Kate. (*She stands by his chair.*)

DRISCOLL:

(*Putting his arm around her.*) A good Irish name, but you're English by the trim av ye, an' be damned to you. But no matther. Ut's fat ye are, Katy

dear, an' I never cud endure skinny wimin. (FREDA *favors him with a viperish glance and sits down by* OLSON.) What'll ye have?

OLSON:

No, Drisc. Dis one bane on me. (*He takes out a roll of notes from his inside pocket and lays one on the table.* JOE, NICK, *and the women look at the money with greedy eyes.* IVAN *gives a particularly violent snore.*)

FREDA:

Waike up your fren'. 'Ow I 'ates to 'ear snorin'!"

DRISCOLL:

(*Springing to action, smashes* IVAN'S *derby over his ears.*) D'you hear the lady talkin' to ye, ye Rooshan swab? (*The only reply to this is a snore.* DRISCOLL *pulls the battered remains of the derby off* IVAN'S *head and smashes it back again.*) Arise an' shine, ye dhrunken dog! (*Another snore. The women giggle.* DRISCOLL *throws the beer left in his glass into* IVAN'S *face. The Russian comes to in a flash, spluttering. There is a roar of laughter.*)

IVAN:

(*Indignantly.*) I tell you—dot's something I don' li-ike!

COCKY:

Down't waste good beer, Drisc.

IVAN:

(*Grumblingly.*) I tell you—dot is not ri-ight.

DRISCOLL:

Ut's your own doin', Ivan. Ye was moanin' for girrls an' whin they come you sit gruntin' loike a pig in a sty. Have ye no manners? (IVAN *seems to see the women for the first time and grins foolishly.*)

KATE:

(*Laughing at him.*) Cheero, ole chum, 'ows Russha?"

IVAN:

(*Greatly pleased—putting his hand in his pocket.*) I buy a drink.

OLSON:

No; dis one bane on me. (*To* JOE.) Hey, you faller!

JOE:

Wot'll it be, Kate?

KATE:

Gin.

FREDA:

Brandy.

DRISCOLL:

An' Irish whiskey for the rist av us —wid the excipshun av our timperance friend, God pity him!

FREDA:

(*To Olson.*) You ain't drinkin'?

OLSON:

(*Half-ashamed.*) No.

FREDA:

(*With a seductive smile.*) I down't blame yer. You got sense, you 'ave. I on'y tike a nip o' brandy now an' agen fur my 'ealth. (JOE *brings the drinks and* OLSON'S *change.* COCKY *gets unsteadily to his feet and raises his glass in the air.*)

COCKY:

'Ere's a toff toast for yer: The ladies, Gawd—(*he hesitates, then adds in a grudging tone*)—bless 'em.

KATE:

(*With a silly giggle.*) Oo-er! That wasn't what you was goin' to say, you bad Cocky, you! (*They all drink.*)

DRISCOLL:

(*To* NICK.) Where's the tune ye was promisin' to give us?

NICK:

Come ahn in the side 'ere an' you'll 'ear it.

DRISCOLL:

(*Getting up.*) Come on, all av ye. We'll have a tune an' a dance if I'm not too dhrunk to dance, God help me. (COCKY *and* IVAN *stagger to their feet.* IVAN *can hardly stand. He is leering at* KATE *and snickering to himself in a maudlin fashion. The three, led by* NICK, *go out the door on the left.* KATE

follows them. OLSON *and* FREDA *remain seated.*)

COCKY:

(*Calling over his shoulder.*) Come on an' dance, Ollie.

OLSON:

Yes, I come. (*He starts to get up. From the side room comes the sound of an accordion and a boisterous whoop from* DRISCOLL *followed by a heavy stamping of feet.*)

FREDA:

Ow, down't go in there. Stay 'ere an' 'ave a talk wiv me. They're all drunk an' you ain't drinkin'. (*With a smile up into his face.*) I'll think yer don't like me if yer goes in there.

OLSON:

(*Confused.*) You wus wrong, Miss Freda. I don't—I mean I do like you.

FREDA:

(*Smiling—puts her hand over his on the table.*) An' I likes you. Yer a genelman. You don't get drunk an' hinsult poor gels wot 'as a 'ard an' uneppy life.

OLSON:

(*Pleased but still more confused—wriggling his feet.*) I bane drunk many time, Miss Freda.

FREDA:

Then why ain't yer drinkin' now? (*She exchanges a quick questioning glance with* JOE *who nods back at her—then she continues persuasively.*) Tell me somethin' abaht yerself.

OLSON:

(*With a grin.*) There ain't noting to say, Miss Freda. I bane poor devil sailor man, dat's all.

FREDA:

Where was you born—Norway? (OLSON *shakes his head.*) Denmark?

OLSON:

No. You guess once more.

FREDA:

Then it must be Sweden.

OLSON:

Yes. I wus born in Stockholm.

FREDA:

(*Pretending great delight.*) Ow, ain't that funny! I was born there, too—in Stockholm.

OLSON:

(*Astonished.*) You wus born in Sweden?

FREDA:

Yus; you wouldn't think it, but it's Gawd's troof.

OLSON:

(*Beaming all over.*) You speak Swedish?

FREDA:

(*Trying to smile sadly.*) Now, y'see my ole man an' woman come 'ere to England when I was on'y a baby an' they was speakin' English b'fore I was old enough to learn. Sow I never knew S w e d i s h. (*Sadly.*) Wisht I 'ad! (*With a smile.*) We'd 'ave a bloomin' lark of it if I 'ad, wouldn't we?

OLSON:

It sound nice to hear the old talk yust once in a time.

FREDA:

Righto! No place like yer 'ome, I says. Are yer goin' up to—to Stockholm b'fore yer ships away agen?

OLSON:

"Yes. I go home from here to Stockholm—(*proudly*)—as passenger!

FREDA:

An' you'll git another ship up there arter you've 'ad a vacation?

OLSON:

No. I don't never ship on sea no more. I got all sea I want for my life—too much hard work for little money. Yust work, work, work on ship. I don't want more.

FREDA:

Ow, I see. That's why you give up drinkin'.

OLSON:

Yes. (*With a grin.*) If I drink I yust get drunk and spend all money.

FREDA:

But if you ain't gointer be a sailor no more, what'll yer do? You been a sailor all yer life, ain't yer?

OLSON:

No. I work on farm till I am eighteen. I like it, too—it's nice—work on farm.

FREDA:

But ain't Stockholm a city same's London? Ain't no farms there, is there?

OLSON:

We live—my brother and mother live—my father iss dead—on farm yust a little way from Stockholm. I have plenty money now. I go back with two years' pay and buy more land yet, work on farm. (*Grinning.*) No more sea, no more bum grub, no more storms—yust nice work.

FREDA:

Ow, ain't that luv'ly! I s'pose you'll be gittin' married, too?

OLSON:

(*Very much confused.*) I don't know. I like to, if I find nice girl, maybe.

FREDA:

Ain't yer got some gel back in Stockholm? I bet yer 'as.

OLSON:

No. I got nice girl once before I go on sea. But I go on ship, and I don't come back, and she marry other faller. (*He grins sheepishly.*)

FREDA:

Well, it's nice fur yer to be goin' 'ome, anyway.

OLSON:

Yes. I tank so.

[*There is a crash from the room on left and the music abruptly stops. A moment later* COCKY *and* DRISCOLL *appear supporting the inert form of* IVAN *between them. He is in the last stage of intoxication, unable to move a muscle.* NICK *follows them and sits down at the table in rear.*]

DRISCOLL:

(*As they zig-zag up to the bar.*) Ut's dead he is, I'm thinkin', for he's as limp as a blarsted corpse.

COCKY:

(*Puffing.*) Gawd, 'e ain't 'arf 'eavy!

DRISCOLL:

(*Slapping* IVAN'S *face with his free hand.*) Wake up, ye divil, ye. Ut's no use. Gabriel's trumpet itself cudn't rouse him. (*To* JOE.) Give us a dhrink, for I'm perishing wid the thirst. 'Tis harrd work, this.

JOE:

Whiskey?

DRISCOLL:

Irish whiskey, ye swab. (*He puts down a coin on the bar.* JOE *serves* COCKY *and* DRISCOLL. *They drink and then swerve over to* OLSON'S *table.*)

OLSON:

Sit down and rest for time, Drisc.

DRISCOLL:

No, Ollie, we'll be takin' this lad home to his bed. Ut's late for wan so young to be out in the night. An' I'd not trust him in this hole as dhrunk as he is, an' him wid a full pay day on him. (*Shaking his fist at* JOE.) Oho, I know your games, me sonny bye!

JOE

(*With an air of grievance.*) There yer goes again—hinsultin' a 'onest man!

COCKY:

Ho, listen to 'im! Guv 'im a shove in the marf, Drisc.

OLSON:

(*Anxious to avoid a fight—getting up.*) I help you take Ivan to boarding house.

FREDA:

(*Protestingly.*) Ow, you ain't goin-

ter leave me, are yer? An' we 'avin' sech a nice talk, an' all.

DRISCOLL:

(*With a wink.*) Ye hear what the lady says, Ollie. Ye'd best stay here, me timperence lady's man. An' we need no help. 'Tis only a bit av a way and we're two strong men if we are dhrunk. Ut's no hard shift to take the remains home. But ye can open the door for us, Ollie. (*Olson goes to the door and opens it.*) Come on, Cocky, an' don't be fallin' aslape yourself. (*They lurch toward the door. As they go out,* DRISCOLL *shouts back over his shoulder.*) We'll be comin' back in a short time, surely. So wait here for us, Ollie.

OLSON:

All right. I wait here, Drisc. (*He stands in the doorway uncertainly.* JOE *makes violent signs to* FREDA *to bring him back. She goes over and puts her arm around* OLSON'S *shoulder.* JOE *motions to* NICK *to come to the bar. They whisper together excitedly.*)

FREDA:

(*Coaxingly.*) You ain't gointer leave me, are yer? (*Then irritably.*) Fur Gawd's sake, shet that door! I'm fair freezin' to death wiv the fog. (OLSON *comes to himself with a start and shuts the door.*)

OLSON:

(*Humbly.*) Excuse me, Miss Freda.

FREDA:

(*Leading him back to the table—coughing.*) Buy me a drink o' brandy, will yer? I'm so cold.

OLSON:

All you want, Miss Freda, all you want. (*To* JOE, *who is still whispering instructions to* NICK.) Hey, Yoe! Brandy for Miss Freda. (*He lays a coin on the table.*)

JOE:

Righto! (*He pours out her drink and brings it to the table.*) 'Avin' somethink yeself, shipmate?

OLSON:

No. I don't tank so. (*He points to his glass with a grin.*) Dis iss only inside-wash, no? (*He laughs.*)

JOE:

(*Hopefully.*) 'Ave a man's drink.

OLSON:

I would like to—but no. If I drink one, I want drink one tousand. (*He laughs again.*)

FREDA:

(*Responding to a vicious nudge from* JOE'S *elbow.*) Ow, tike somethin'. I ain't gointer drink all be meself.

OLSON:

Den give me a little yinger beer—small one. (JOE *goes back of the bar, making a sign to* NICK *to go to their table.* NICK *does so and stands so that the sailor cannot see what* JOE *is doing.*)

JOE:

(*To make talk.*) Where's yer mates popped orf ter? (JOE *pours the contents of the little bottle into* OLSON'S *glass of ginger beer.*)

OLSON:

Dey take Ivan dat drunk faller, to bed. They come back. (JOE *brings* OLSON'S *drink to the table and sets it before him.*)

JOE:

(To NICK—*angrily.*) 'Op it, will yer? There ain't no time to be dawdlin'. See? 'Urry!

NICK:

Down't worry, ole bird; I'm orf. (*He hurries out the door.* JOE *returns to his place behind the bar.*)

OLSON:

(*After a pause—worriedly.*) I tank I should go after dem. Cocky iss very drunk, too, and Drisc—

FREDA:

R! The big Irish is all right. Didn't yer 'ear 'im say as 'ow they'd surely come back 'ere, an' fur you to wait fur 'em?

OLSON:

Yes; but if dey don't come soon I tank I go see if dey are in boarding house all right.

FREDA:

Where is the boardin' 'ouse?

OLSON:

Yust little way back from street here.

FREDA:

You stayin' there, too?

OLSON:

Yes—until steamer sail for Stockholm—in two day.

FREDA:

(*She is alternately looking at* JOE and *feverishly trying to keep* OLSON *talking so he will forget about going away after the others.*) Yer mother won't be arf glad to see yer agen, will she? (OLSON *smiles.*) Does she know yer comin'?

OLSON:

No. I tought I would yust give her surprise. I write to her from Bonos Eres, but I don't tell her I come home.

FREDA:

Must be old, ain't she, yer ole lady?

OLSON:

She iss eighty-two. (*He smiles reminiscently.*) You know, Miss Freda, I don't see my mother or my brother in —let me tank—(*he counts laboriously on his fingers*)—must be more than ten year. I write once in while and she write many time; and my brother he write me, too. My mother say in all letter I should come home right away. My brother he write same ting, too. He want me to help him on farm. I write back always I come soon; and I mean all time to go back home at end of voyage. But I come ashore, I take one drink, I take many drinks, I get drunk, I spend all money, I have to ship away for other voyage. So dis time I say to myself: Don't drink one drink, Ollie, or sure, you don't get home. And I want go home dis time. I feel homesick for farm and to see my people again. (*He smiles.*) Yust like little boy, I feel homesick. Dat's why I don't drink noting tonight but dis—inside-wash! (*He roars with childish laughter; then suddenly becomes serious.*) You know, Miss Freda, my mother get very old, and I want to see her. She might die and I would never—

FREDA:

(*Moved a lot in spite of herself.*) Ow, don't talk like that! I jest 'ates to 'ear anyone speakin' abaht dyin'. [*The door to the street is opened and* NICK *enters, followed by two rough-looking, shabbily-dressed men wearing mufflers, with caps pulled down over their eyes. They sit at the table nearest to the door.* JOE *brings them three beers, and there is a whispered consultation with many glances in the direction of Olson.*]

OLSON:

(*Starting to get up—worriedly.*) I tank I go round to boarding house. I tank someting go wrong with Drisc and Cocky.

FREDA:

Ow, down't go. They kin take care of theyselves. They ain't babies. Wait 'arf a mo'. You ain't 'ad yer drink yet.

JOE:

(*Coming hastily over to the table, indicates the men in the rear with a jerk of his thumb.*) One of them blokes wants yer to 'ave a wet wiv 'im.

FREDA:

Righto! (*To* OLSON.) Let's drink this. (*She raises her glass. He does the same.*) 'Ere's a toast fur yer: Success to yer bloomin' farm an' may yer live long an' 'appy on it. Skö!! (*She tosses down her brandy. He swallows half his glass of ginger beer and makes a wry face.*)

OLSON:

Skö!! (*He puts down his glass.*)

FREDA:

(*With feigned indignation.*) Down't yer like my toast?

OLSON:

(*Grinning.*) Yes. It iss very kind, Miss Freda.

FREDA:

Then drink it all like I done.

OLSON:

Well—(*he gulps down the rest*)—dere! (*He laughs.*)

FREDA:

Done like ta sport!

ONE OF THE ROUGHS:

(*With a laugh.*) Amindra, ahoy!

NICK:

(*Warningly.*) Sssshh!

OLSON:

(*Turns around in his chair.*) Amindra? Iss she in port? I sail on her once long time ago—three mast, full rig, skys'l yarder? Iss dat ship you mean?

THE ROUGH:

(*Grinning.*) Yus; right you are.

OLSON:

(*Angrily.*) I know dat damn ship—worst ship dat sail to sea. Rotten grub and dey make you work all time—and the Captain and Mate wus Bluenose devils. No sailor who know anyting ever ship on her. Where iss she bound from here?

THE ROUGH

Round Cape 'Orn—sails at daybreak.

OLSON:

Py yingo, I pity poor fallers make dat trip round Cape Stiff dis time year. I bet you some of dem never see port once again. (*He passes his hand over his eyes in a dazed way. His voice grows weaker.*) Py golly, I feel dizzy. All the room go round and round like I wus drunk. (*He gets weakly to his feet.*) Good night, Miss Freda. I bane feeling sick. Tell Drisc—I go home. (*He takes a step forward and suddenly collapses over a chair, rolls to the floor, and lies there unconscious.*

JOE:

(*From behind the bar.*) Quick, nawh! (NICK *darts forward with* JOE *following.* FREDA *is already beside the unconscious man and has taken the roll of money from his inside pocket. She strips off a note furtively and shoves it into her bosom, trying to conceal her action, but* JOE *sees her. She hands the roll to* JOE, *who pockets it.* NICK *goes through all the other pockets and lays a handful of change on the table.*)

JOE:

(*Impatiently.*) 'Urry, urry, can't yer? The other blokes'll be 'ere in 'arf a mo'. (*The two roughs come forward.*) 'Ere, you two, tike 'im in under the arms like 'e was drunk. (*They do so.*) Tike 'im to the Amindra—yer knows that, don't yer?—two docks above. Nick'll show yer. An' you, Nick, down't yer leave the bleedin' ship till the capt'n guvs yer this bloke's advance—full month's pay—five quid, d'yer 'ear?

NICK:

I knows me bizness, ole bird. (*They support* OLSON *to the door.*)

THE ROUGH:

(*As they are going out.*) This silly bloke'll 'ave the s'prise of 'is life when 'e wakes up on board of 'er. (*They laugh. The door closes behind them.* FREDA *moves quickly for the door on the left, but* JOE *gets in her way and stops her.*)

JOE:

(*Threateningly.*) Guv us what yer took!

FREDA:

Took? I guv yer all 'e 'ad.

JOE:

Yer a liar! I seen yer a-playin' yer sneakin' tricks, but yer can't fool Joe. I'm too old a 'and. (*Furiously.*) Guv it to me, yer cow! (*He grabs her by the arm.*)

FREDA:

Lemme alone! I ain't got no—

JOE:

(*Hits her viciously on the side of the jaw. She crumples up on the floor.*) That'll learn yer! (*He stoops down and fumbles in her bosom and pulls out the bank note which he stuffs into his pocket with a grunt of satisfaction.* KATE *opens the door on the left and looks in—then rushes to* FREDA *and lifts her head up in her arms.*)

KATE:

(*Gently.*) Pore dearie! (*Looking at* JOE *angrily.*) Been 'ittin' 'er agen, 'ave yer, yer cowardly dog!

JOE:

Yus; an' I'll 'it you, too, if yer don't keep yer marf shut. Tike 'er aht of 'ere! (KATE *carries* FREDA *into the next room.* JOE *goes behind the bar. A moment later the outer door is opened and* DRISCOLL *and* COCKY *come in.*)

DRISCOLL:

Come on, Ollie. (*He suddenly sees that* OLSON *is not there, and turns to* JOE.) Where is ut he's gone to?

JOE:

(*With a meaning wink.*) 'E an' Freda went aht t'gether 'bout five minutes past. 'E's fair gone on 'er, 'e is.

DRISCOLL:

(*With a grin.*) Oho, so that's ut, is ut? Who'd think Ollie'd be sich a divil wid the wimin? 'Tis lucky he's sober or she'd have him stripped to his last hapenny. (*Turning to* COCKY, *who is blinking sleepily.*) What'll ye have, ye little scut? (*To* JOE.) Give me whiskey, *Irish* whiskey!

THE CURTAIN FALLS

SILENCE

By Babette Deutsch

SILENCE with you is like the faint delicious
Smile of a child asleep, in dreams unguessed:
Only the hinted wonder of its dreaming,
The soft, slow-breathing miracle of rest.
Silence with you is like a kind departure
From iron clangour and the engulfing crowd
Into a wide and greenly barren meadow
Under the bloom of some blue-blossomed cloud;
Or like one held upon the sands at evening,
When the drawn tide rolls out, and the mixed light
Of sea and sky enshrouds the far, wind-bellowed
Sails that move darkly on the edge of night.

THE history of virtue is inevitably the history of vice. The history of civilization is the history of barbarity. The history of humanity is the history of inhumanity. And the history of love finds its twin epic in the history of marriage.

THE TRUTH ABOUT DELBRIDGE

By Vincent Starrett

THE singular circumstances in which my friend, Delbridge, passed to his account having been duly muddled in the daily press and forgotten by all save a few former intimates (whose brilliant accounts as furnished to inquisitive journalists with intent to defend Delbridge served not a little to garble the matter for the delectation of the public), it becomes my duty, if not my pleasure, to set forth this final account of his tortured passing. I think it may be considered authoritative. If I was not present at the fantastic ceremony, I was the first to see the dead man after he had been rendered dead; while my intimate friendship with Miss Delbridge has been a matter of common gossip for months.

Francis Delbridge was, as is well known, the noted golfer. It will be recalled that he captured the national amateur championship four years hand running and then went down before the Englishman, Craven. In private life he neglected a flourishing brokerage business and his wife, and entertained royally at the expense of his clientèle and his health. His affair with Vannie Wayne, the screen star, whom he chased across two continents, was still unforgotten when his grotesquely horrible death superseded it in the public mind. All this is known; I recapitulate briefly to make the statement complete.

I think the first hint I had that Delbridge's mind was becoming unhinged was on the day he came to me frankly and informed me of his love for my wife. I rather admired his cool effrontery—it was hardly insolence—but I own I was staggered by the shocking suggestion that followed.

He offered, calmly enough, to play eighteen holes with me on any course I might choose, our lives to be the stake for which we played. In reality, of course, Mrs. Graydon was to be the stake. The winner was to be left unmolested in the field; the loser was to remove himself from the world as expeditiously as possible.

When I had recovered from my astonishment I did not immediately reject the monstrous proposal. There was a mad glint in his eye, and I determined to humor him for the moment with argument.

"You come to your point with commendable candor," I said. "May I inquire whether you have reason to believe that with me out of the way your suit would prosper?"

He hesitated.

"I will continue to be frank," he replied at length. "The truth is, I don't know. I have persuaded myself at times to believe it might be so; and again I have been tortured with doubts. With you out of the way, as you express it, I could at least push matters to a point of decision. My acquaintance with Mrs. Graydon to date, I may say, has been as honorable as my emotion is sincere—which, I think, is somewhat more than can be said of *your* acquaintance with my sister."

"I think we may safely leave that matter out of the discussion," I remarked drily.

"Yes," he acquiesced, "I had no intention of making comparisons, or of upbraiding you. Sue is well enough able to take care of her own affairs."

"And Mrs. Delbridge?" I inquired whimsically.

"Will offer no objections whatever.

She is ill-prepared to dispute any action I may take."

"You are reasonably sure of your ground in your own mind, I suppose," I could not but say. "But, honestly, don't you think it rather unfair to make it a golf hazard?—if you will forgive the—pun! You are—well, you are Delbridge, and I play a notorious game."

"That is true," he responded instantly. "I own it had not occurred to me. Golf is my game and I naturally thought of it first. What shall it be? Dice? Or cards? Indeed"—he smiled charmingly—"as the challenged party, you may choose the weapons, my dear fellow!"

I thought it time to close the interview. Delbridge was assuming too much.

"And as the challenged party, I decline the match," I told him. "I have no grievance to warrant it. Nor is my faith in your assumption with reference to Mrs. Graydon strong enough for me to yield in your favor. You are mad, Delbridge. Go away some place and rest. I pass over the monstrous nature of your suggestion in view of the evident condition of your mind."

He took it easily enough, although it was plain that he was angry.

"You are a fool," he said amiably, as he prepared to depart. "You will see that I was right. As for the stake suggested—if you should care to reconsider—perhaps a trip to China—"

I met his gaze steadily.

"You know I do not fear death," I said.

"Yes," he acceded grudgingly, "I suppose I know that. . . . Good-bye."

Just the same I questioned Mrs. Graydon, lightly, to ascertain if there might be, after all, some fire behind Delbridge's smoke. She told me frankly that she liked Delbridge very much; he amused her and flattered her vanity, but he moved her heart not at all. She had been to the theater with him a number of times, and to the beach, but he had always been respectful to an absurd degree. I was satisfied that she spoke only the truth, and I began to respect Delbridge myself.

I saw no more of him for a long time. Vaguely I heard of his doings through Sue, but his movements seemed unimportant and insignificant so far as I was concerned. He was in California; he was in Maine; he had gone to Florida, to Michigan. On the Canadian shore, opposite a point in the latter state, he had a summer cottage—an isolated resort which he sought in moments of stress. His seeking it might suggest unusual strain and emotion, but it also suggested to me that he might return vastly benefited.

Then one day, some thirteen months after the interview with Delbridge which I have narrated, Sue informed me he had gone to Philadelphia. This was an unusual departure, for he loathed Philadelphia almost as much as he did Chicago. I could not imagine his errand until Sue added the information that Mrs. Delbridge was stopping in Philadelphia with friends. She believed he was endeavoring to effect a reconciliation with his wife.

Knowing Delbridge, I knew that this—if it were true—was his most amazing action yet, and I own I was baffled by it. Either he had completely lost his reason or he had completely recovered it and was turning evangelist.

This episode marked the beginning of the end, although not even I suspected it at the time. I suspected nothing when the telegram came announcing the death of Mrs. Delbridge in Philadelphia. I wondered why Delbridge had chosen me as the first recipient of the information, but supposed he wished it communicated instantly to Sue. The message was brief and announced merely the fact. The newspaper accounts, while also brief, were slightly more informative. It seemed that Mrs. Delbridge had suffered a heart attack during the night at a hotel, whither she had gone with her husband, and it was a melancholy feature of the occurrence that husband and wife, according to report, had just become reconciled after

an estrangement that had lasted three years.

Delbridge's message came at a time when I was poorly prepared to give thought to events outside of my own walls, for only two days before its arrival Mrs. Graydon had been visited with what Shakespeare calls "that pleasing pain which women bear," and I was agitated by the advent of my first son. Sue had been invaluable in the crisis, as befitted so close a friend of the family, and Mrs. Graydon was grateful for her presence. Sue was shocked, however, by the news from the east, and, I think, as I look back on it, a trifle frightened.

Delbridge came back, hot foot, having buried his wife with fantastic obsequies that shocked the clergy and furnished columns of newspaper copy. He confronted me in the reception hall of my home, late at night, beginning and ending his remarks virtually at the front door.

He was whiter than I ever had seen him before and his voice shook. Indeed, his whole frame trembled as with the palsy.

"What's this I hear?" he shrilled in frantic haste, seizing my arm violently. "You've got a child! Ha, you don't deny it! Sue told me, but I wouldn't believe it. Answer me, you . . . you hound!"

I slipped my arm through his, affectionately.

"Take a brace, old man," I soothed, although I was startled by his violence and excitement. "Brace up and take it easy. Of course, I have a baby. Why should I deny it? Come in here."

I tried to draw him into the library, for I had heard two separate doors open upstairs, and, heaven knows, my servants had enough to talk about as it was.

"Let go my arm," he shouted. "Damn your sympathy! And let me out of your house before I kill you . . ."

He fumbled at the door knob in raging haste and made some difficulty of letting himself out. On the threshold he turned.

"I came here to kill you," he snarled, his face contorted with hate. "I came here to kill you . . . and, by God, I don't know why I don't do it!"

After which he flung himself furiously down the steps and reeled away into the night, walking obliquely and at an astonishing pace.

I pondered over the savage visitation for some time and went to bed puzzled and disturbed. The next day, about noon, Sue sought me out with an apprehensive look that increased my disquietude.

"He's gone!" she declared, succinctly.

"What do you mean?" I asked, my uneasiness making my voice querulous.

"Frank's gone," she repeated. "I don't know where. He wrote me a letter, last night, and left it on my dresser. I found it this morning. His bed hadn't been slept in. It must have been nearly morning when he went out. I'm afraid he's going to kill himself, and . . . Harvey . . . he killed *her!*"

"What!" I cried. "Who?"

"His wife!"

The wonder was that I had not guessed it. As soon as she spoke the words I knew it was the truth.

"How do you know?" I asked cautiously.

"He said so . . . in his letter."

She pulled it from her bosom and I read it almost at a glance. . . . No brutal description of the deed, but a plain statement of the fact that he had killed her. To this day, I have no idea how he accomplished it. It must have been contrived in some hellish and cunning fashion, for no suspicion of it, I believe, ever entered the minds of the eastern authorities.

As for the letter, we burned it together, Sue and I. If by so doing we placed our liberty in jeopardy, I can only say that we did not give that feature of the case a thought. It seemed the only thing to do. The tone of the missive indicated plainly enough that Delbridge was quite demented, and there was every reason to believe, as Sue had said, that he meditated further violence with himself as the subject.

I do not flatter myself that I possess a superior intuition. I did know Delbridge, however, and almost on the instant that I finished with reading his letter I knew where to look for him. I caught the next train for Detroit and arrived in the Michigan city late that evening.

I would have been glad to postpone the business in hand until daylight, but Delbridge's state of mind admitted of no delay on my part. I had plenty of money with me and I spent it freely, but in spite of everything it was after 2 a. m. when my feet touched Canadian soil. It was after three before I had procured an automobile, and another hour had passed when my driver plunged into Taylorville, the nearest township to Delbridge's summer cottage.

The marshal proved a zealous assistant from this point, when I had routed him out of bed, and we resumed the journey without unnecessary delay, reinforced by the marshal himself and a stalwart policeman, with a lantern.

To be frank, I had small notion that we would be in time, but no one would be able to say that I had not put forth my best efforts.

The night was black enough for the first few miles of riding. There were no lights but our own, and the road was tortuous and hilly and shaded on either side, for the most part, with heavy timber. The conditions under which we made the trip, coupled with the nature of our errand, developed a situation calculated to chill the blood of a grenadier.

The cottage sat down close to the shore, at the foot of a slight rise, and was approached by a roundabout path leading off the main road and skirting the shore in its last stages. This we were forced to take on foot, myself in the lead, with the constable at my elbow holding his lantern out ahead of him.

As we came around the bend that had hidden the cottage from sight, we were amazed to find it brilliantly lighted, and a flickering ray out on the water was thereby explained. Every room in the house was ablaze with light; the trees outside, in line with the windows, were weirdly dappled by the display. I think we were all somewhat relieved. The constable doused his lantern and we pressed forward with greater eagerness.

"Delbridge!" I shouted, as we approached the house. But there was no answer to my hail.

I ran hastily up the three steps and crossed the porch at a bound. The front door stood wide open and I plunged through. What I saw caused me to recoil into the arms of the constable, who was at my heels.

My head reeled and my eyes swam in my brain. What hideous masquerade was this into which we had blundered? Yet it was Delbridge's cottage on the doorsill of which we stood. Within, hanging by a silken girdle thrown over a rafter of the low-ceilinged apartment, was the body of a man.

The face was turned away from us; the body oscillated gently at the girdle's end, the toes barely scraping the floor. But what was—in Heaven's name, what was the dwarfed, painted face that peered over the right shoulder of the swaying corpse? A foot or two beyond, on the wall, hung a long mirror into which the dead eyes were looking. . . .

"My Gawd!" whispered the marshal softly. "Watched himself die!"

I had shuddered at sight of the mirror. Then, suddenly, with a cry of horror, I realized all that had happened. It was the twisted face of Francis Delbridge that stared whitely out of the glass at the swaying figure; it was the painted eyes of a china doll, thrust in the bosom of his coat, that peered so quaintly over his shoulder. . . .

"Watched himself die," repeated the marshal later, still in an awed whisper. "With a little doll in his arms! My Gawd!"

I have sometimes thought that Delbridge's affection for my wife was singularly sincere.

THE RESIGNATION OF NEW YORK

By Benjamin De Casseres

THE supper was fine, and the wine was finer, and still more filling than either was the night, cold, serene, moonlit.

I had heard "The Tales of Hoffman" that evening. Its witchery, its bouquet of dreams, its haunting melodies still had full possession of me. It seemed I had become a ghost wandering through that nowhere land of Hoffman, that Venice woven of strange psychic stuffs, with those grotesque magicians and those unheard-of people, whose unreality numbed the sense of the familiar and made me tread carpets woven by gnomes in strange, nostalgic hemispheres of the soul.

I turned up Riverside Drive. It was 1 A. M. If the Barcarole and the Burgundy and the miasmatic twilight of the Grand Canal had not woven their spells over my brain, the Drive, the river and the Palisades in the distance, all covered with snow and shimmering in the moonlight like the stupendous tombstones in a forgotten necropolis of Titans, would have done so.

It was the magic moment of rare, unforgettable happenings, of vast, infernal doings, of strange and grotesque fantasies.

I sat upon the stone seat surrounding the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument to gulp in that scene of snow-magic and lunar necromancy and mix it with the Burgundy and the myths of that madman who wrote the Tales and the wizard who translated them into sound.

I had not been sitting there more than a minute when I became aware that something tremendously unusual was going on, or rather coming up, the Drive.

A titanic footfall, like the march of Thor, first came to my ear.

Then another and another. It was heaven-filling and measured. It was the very sound of Doom, the herald of a Finality.

I looked down the Drive and I saw the Woolworth Tower, struck clean from the rest of the building from pillar to dome, coming up the Drive. There was not a light in a single window, but at the top burned a small candle that flickered and sneezed as though it would go out at any minute.

The Tower led the most astonishing procession that ever mortal eye shall look upon. Behind the Tower tramped thunderously the Statue of Liberty. She held her torch, extinguished, in her hand. Then came Diana, from the top of Madison Square Garden; the two Library Lions, the statue of Shakespeare from the Mall in Central Park, the twelve owls from Herald Square, their eyes darkened; the old City Hall Clocks, the Golden Lady from atop the Municipal Building, and last of all the Brooklyn Bridge, crawling along like a tired snake, its cables making a most unearthly racket, which nearly drowned the earth-quivering thuds of the Woolworth Tower and the Statue of Liberty.

As the Tower passed, in its tremendous tramp, shimmering in the moonlight and the snow like an alabaster shaft supporting the heavens, it said to me:

"My soul is a series of pigeon-holes called rooms. I am Business. I am Profit and Loss. I am Beauty come into the hell of the Practical. Farewell.

I am marching back to the deep-earth quarries whence I came."

Diana, with her arrow, pointed at the stars, said:

"I am Paganism, the ancient glory that is no more. What do I here? I have watched the moderns of Madison Square with their stupid clothes and ugly faces and unchaste forms till my heart is turned to brass and my breasts to iron. I go back to the Moon to hunt wild boars in the basins of the seas that are no more."

The two Library Lions, with melancholy names and lack-lustre eyes, said:

"Taken from the jungle, carved into stone, set to watch traffic cops and people who believe wisdom is in books! We are the apotheosis of pacifism. We are returning to Africa, where there is still some freedom and wisdom!"

Shakespeare, his head poised like a planet in the ether, said:

"Farewell, farewell to all that humbug called *vers libre*. I return to Titania and Ariel. I cannot dream there in the Mall. It is only the children who have made life livable for me there. Besides, I'm afraid the Rubber building will fall on me."

The twelve owls from Herald Square, blinking their sightless orbs at the snow and moonlight, said:

"If you see it in the newspapers maybe it is so; but we do not care a rap whether it is true or not. The rumble of the presses interfered with our digestion, and the buzz about the war has killed our proverbial wisdom. We are bound for the Fourth Dimension, where there is no news."

The old City Hall Clocks, martyrs to the weather and fire, their gilded letters half faded and their hands chafed and cracked, said:

"We have told our last lie. There is no such thing as time; there are only timepieces. We are going to the tomb of Immanuel Kant, at Koenigsberg, he who destroyed the objectivity of Time and Space, and hence abolished clocks. We shall crawl into his coffin and sleep. Sleep! Sleep! That's what all clocks need!"

The Golden Lady from the summit of the Municipal Building said

"Justice is a dice-box. The rich always throw three sixes, while the poor get the box. I'm going to commit suicide in yon icy river at a warm spot near Hastings."

The Brooklyn Bridge was making such an uproar that I could not hear what it said.

I looked upon the bridge, intending to follow that strange procession to the end. But a powerful grip on my shoulder restrained me.

"D'ye want ter freeze to det, hey?"

It was a policeman. I gave him a bundle of cigars I had in my pocket and walked toward Broadway.

But as I left him the policeman, strangely enough, was humming the Barcarole.

AFTER all, the double standard in morality is quite wrong. Every man should have just as many privileges as a woman.

THE more loves a woman has the greater grows her cynicism. The more loves a man has the greater grows his danger.

THE REAL THING

By Stuyvesant Hilliard

I

CONTEMPLATING the early career of Lady Jane I suspect that good press-agents sigh with ecstatic wistfulness and hopeful actresses shake marcelled heads in envious veneration, as apprentices before the works of a master-hand.

She was born with an instinct for the center of the stage, the spotlight, the public eye; she could no more avoid attention than an earthquake, and she had about the same faculty for getting it with a considerable jolt to the innocent bystander. At seventeen she played back on a polo four of girls which wiped up a nine-hundred-foot stretch of turf at Westbury with a quartette of more or less male performers; before the papers had tired of mentioning that incident she walked from Boston to Bar Harbor against time on a bet with one of her mentally unemployed acquaintances, escorted by a squad of crawling motors. Before that was quite cool in public memory she cajoled one of the aviating pioneers to take her on a flight over the Fens, and was subsequently dug out of a bit of swamp with a broken collarbone to show for the experience. She scraped acquaintance with a rising young pugilist, after that, and brought him home to her aunt's Bar Harbor cottage for a formal dinner. These were all by way of a beginning. She kept herself so continuously in the newspapers for the next four years that even I knew her name and had a hazy idea of her appearance, which means a good deal, for my ignorance of matters social verged—and verges—on the abysmal.

It was a dull week in which she wasn't rumored to be engaged to someone—one day it would be the heir to a frightful accumulation of millions, and before the denials of that had got fairly into print it would be a matinée idol or a visiting diplomat. There was a prince in the list, who had to be hastily recalled to the dinky little state where he belonged and packed off on an exploring venture in mid-Africa, where the perils didn't include such formidable fauna as Lady Jane Dexter. Sunday newspapers revelled in that affair for months, with fanciful sketches combining minaretted castles with rearing polo ponies and loop-the-loop aeroplanes, framed in a border of interrogation points. Every woman in the country knew Lady Jane Dexter, and a good many men who honestly weren't interested in the doings of society could have told you more about her than I could.

The public was prepared, of course, for a marriage as spectacularly eccentric as her earlier exploits. It was inevitable that Lady Jane would not miss that splendid opportunity for delivering another solar-plexus jolt to the conventions of her crowd. But nobody dreamed of her doing such an utterly insane thing as marrying a man no one had ever heard of, a man who'd lived for twenty-eight years without once getting his name in the newspapers or the social weeklies, a man who earned forty dollars a week by writing copy in an obscure advertising agency, lived in a toy flat with another equally insignificant nobody and lacked even a secret ambition to dazzle and shine. I think I was more surprised than any-

body else, because, as it turned out, I was the man she married.

During the two days which elapsed between the moment when I helped Lady Jane change a tire on her racing runabout, out on the Post Road, and the instant when a slightly flustered parson told us that we were man and wife I was rather too much engrossed with more important matters to reflect on the social aspect of the affair. The blueness of Lady Jane's wide-set eyes obscured effectively the deeper blueness of her blood. The fact that she possessed an astonishing number of the only genuinely adorable freckles in the universe was considerably more thrilling than her acquaintance with the Ponsonby Tuckers or the Beverley-Perkinses. The length and strength and wholesomeness of her, the astonishing kissableness of her wide, merry mouth, the comfortable bigness of her hands and feet, and, most of all, her bewildering appreciation of my hitherto unsuspected charm—all of these things mattered infinitely more than the trifling detail that she was Lady Jane Dexter. It was only when the storm broke over us that I realized the enormity of what I had done, that my social self-consciousness woke into a kind of sneaking snobbery that I'd never dreamed I possessed.

Lady Jane was inured to limelight. The headlines we read together over our breakfast-tray only amused her. But to me they came as a sort of mental shower-bath, with the same kind of a gasp at the diaphragm you feel when the water splashes on your shivering skin. Lady Jane, who had been up to that moment a particularly eye-soothing wife, became suddenly, in spite of a boudoir cap and an undeniably intimate peignoir, a remote and awe-inspiring embodiment of aristocracy, a stranger, an impressive, tongue-tying personage. I was aghast at my effrontery in having married her. I was, I felt, no end of a darling of destiny, like Napoleon and Jess Willard and Abraham Lincoln.

"Some men are born great," I remarked. "Some achieve greatness and some marry—"

"That will be all," said Lady Jane calmly.

"But I feel like a man who's been kissing a pretty peasant and finds out she's the princess in disguise. It's a very Graustarky feeling, Lady."

Somehow I was kissing her again. I hate to admit it, but I was distinctly aware of the fact that it was Lady Jane Dexter who was at the other end of that kiss. I had a sort of premonition right then that something was wrong with this attitude, that I was due for a lot of unpleasant enlightenment on the subject of social values. It took me one hour to get back on solid earth, cured permanently of that particular phase of snobbery.

Lady Jane's aunt, Mrs. Courtland Dexter herself, was the ladder by which I descended. It is one thing to pride one's self on having married a princess of the blood royal; it is something very much else to realize that you are the wrong end of a mésalliance. Up to that time I hadn't been aware of myself as a social entity. After swooping up like a balloon with the idea that I'd contracted aristocracy by marriage, and then swooping down to the realization that instead I'd infected a perfectly good aristocrat with my plebeian taint, I got back to the level ground again. Mrs. Dexter's manner in casting off the graceless niece who had dishonored her rank and her tribe was so much like "Way Down East" and "The Old Homestead" that I half expected to see a lot of scrap-paper snow sifting down in the hall as we slunk out of the Presence, to darken those doors nevermore. Out on the porch, with an awed flunky shutting the door after us like an angel in livery, *sans* a flaming sword, barring the gates of Paradise on unworthy humans, we stood still and had our laugh out.

"Where do we go from here," asked Lady. "I've got thirty dollars left from last month's check."

"I've got four hundred in the savings

bank," I boasted. "And a job. We'll go home—from here."

II

"It sounds good—that word," said Lady.

Somehow it did—there's been a special meaning in it ever since. I wired Bill—he could easily clear out of our flat for a week or two till we got settled—and we took the next train for New York. My two-week vacation was up on Monday and the job had never looked quite so good to me as it did then. I felt as if I could write copy that would sell sand in Sahara, with Lady Jane in the background of my brain. Going down we talked about the hollowness of the social sham, the general futility of class-distinctions in a democracy, the essential viciousness of snobbery.

I told Lady about Bill, with a kind of comfortable satisfaction in the thought that he was one man, at least, who'd feel that she'd got all the best of it in this mésalliance of ours. I'd lived with Bill for six years in the kind of easy-going intimacy which rubs down the surface till you can't help seeing what's underneath, and I counted on him. He'd like Lady Jane for my sake; he'd like her for her own sake when he knew her, but her having been Lady Jane Dexter wouldn't mean enough to him to be regarded as a blemish. I'd been socially unconscious; Bill was socially unborn. He had a job on the *Sun*, in those days, and you could spot his steady-going stolidity in every line he wrote for it. There was no froth or floss about Bill Morrow.

When we got in at the Grand Central and I caught sight of his big, round face beaming at me from behind the rope barrier, it was like getting back home after a tiresome trip. He came up to us rather shyly, I thought. He shook hands with me, not the bone-cracking grip I expected, but a perfunctory, Presidential kind of a counterfeit, as if he felt a bit bashful about actually touching my exalted person. I felt the change in him right then.

"Lady, this is Bill," I said, wondering what ailed him. He grinned sickeningly and bowed as if he were a grand vizier doubtful about the safety of his neck.

"I'm charmed," he said, in a high, strained voice and a perfectly asinine accent. "I've heard no end about you from my friend, Freddy van Arsdale, you know."

I stared at him. It didn't seem possible that this was Bill, pulling that imitation of a forty-dollar actor's imitation of a Percy. As for his friend, van Arsdale, Bill had interviewed him exactly once, when his car hit a hard-working barkeeper, and his version of the affair, reported pungently to me, had smoked with profane disapproval. His friend, Freddy!

"I've a cab outside, old top," he told me, in the same voice and accent. "And I've ordered a bite at the Ritz—if you'll permit me the honor of playing host."

I saw then that he was in his dinner suit, a venerable affair he used when he had to report banquets and loathed fervently at all times. Also he'd been freshly manicured and his nails glittered like the pot-bottoms in the Sapolio ads.

"The Ritz nothing," I said coarsely. "Childs' is our speed, you profligate. And talk English, Bill, for a change. This Newport manner of yours is rapidly getting my goat. I'm not used to it."

He gave me a pained look and turned to Lady Jane with that apologetic air with which one glozes over the lamentable eccentricities of a friend.

"Danny loves to pose as a commoner," he told her. "I suppose you've already discovered that?"

"He does it pretty well," said Lady Jane. I caught a glimpse of her face and it wore the rapt expression of a child getting its first view of the sea robins at the Aquarium. And it came over me, with a kind of sick shame, that I'd been bragging to her about

this animal, telling her what a good scout he was, cracking him up as if he represented my ideal of the perfect citizen!

"We all know Danny," he laughed in his fool falsetto. "He's the best chap in the world, even if he does play at being a democrat now and then. Let's get on. I'm rather anxious about the potage, you know. If it's not served at the precise instant it's ruined—absolutely.

"Soup's soup," said Lady Jane oracularly. "Don't worry about it—I'll eat my share."

We went to the Ritz. There was no denying Bill. I could see that he was having the time of his young life. He ushered us into the grill—we couldn't tackle the main dining-room because of our mufti—with the air of a ring-master exhibiting a pair of prize elephants. "Take Mrs. Dexter-Judson's wrap, Henri," he commanded grandly. "And, Henri, if any newspaper men try to annoy Mrs. Dexter-Judson, refer them to me. She's incognito to-night, you understand." A bill passed between them. And Bill drew fifty a week!

Bill's idea of a dinner proved that he's been consulting with the society woman at the *Sun*—I never met the dishes he fed us before or since. He spoke severely about the temperature of the wine and insisted on sending back one affair of truffles for further attention from the chef. His conversation with Lady Jane betrayed an intimacy with the names and idiosyncrasies of the Four Thousand of which I'd never have suspected him. I guessed that he'd had some expert coaching here, too. He was insufferable. I kicked him under the table as savagely as I dared; I punctured his bluff over and over with my most militantly rough-neck dialect and metaphor; but it was no use. Even with my weight hanging to him, his heels simply could not be kept on the ground. He saw us to the cab at last, and before the man had started it I could see him in condescending conference with some of the newspaper boys he'd brought around to the rooms in his chrysalis stage.

"Well?" said Lady Jane. She wastes few words. Her tone conveyed several paragraphs.

"Bill's trying to do me honor in your eyes," I told her. "He's got the fool idea that unless he shows himself to be as fine and fancy as the polo-players you'll conceive a secret scorn for your base-born spouse. He's all right. Wait till he wakes up. You'll like him."

"I like him already," said Lady Jane. "He's all right—underneath. I couldn't blame him for that—that *dog* he pulled on me. It was like listening to a nice little girl repeating a string of swear-words without the faintest idea of what they meant."

I believe I've conveyed the impression that Lady Jane inspires a certain approval in me. I don't know whether the Four Hundred code of ethics approves of kissing one's wife in a taxicab threading Broadway traffic, and I'm afraid I don't care. I did it. I did it again. Lady Jane kissed back. You haven't been kissed, any of you!

III

BILL'S treble tone and his Canadian accent wore out mercifully soon. The absurdity of trying to bluff those borrowed plumes against my six-year familiarity with his diction finally dawned on him, and he lapsed into normal speech, which was something gained, to be sure. But he clung persistently to his new snobbery, nevertheless. He took Lady Jane's purpleness of pedigree as solemnly as he took most things. He explained it patiently to me, clearly possessed of the idea that I failed to grasp the subject.

He even labored with Lady Jane herself about it. She didn't take her aristocracy any more seriously than I did. In fact, she was disposed to be irreverent about some links in the chain, and pained Bill by referring to one of her great ancestors who'd had the low taste to get himself hanged for sheep-

stealing in the early Massachusetts days. Bill couldn't make her see it at all. He kept up his affectation of acquaintance with her ex-pals, too. He'd drag in Freddy van Arsdale by the heels on the slightest pretext, and gradually he enlarged his circle to include a good many of Freddy's crowd. Maybe he did know some of them. The point is that once started on his career of snobbery, Bill was incurable. And yet we couldn't despise him for it, either. Which was funny, because for a snob in the abstract I entertain about the same warm, personal regard that I feel toward a hair in my butter. I liked Bill just as much as ever, and Lady Jane swore by him. His mania for feigning the honors of the élite didn't matter, after we got used to it, any more than we'd have minded a broken nose or a glass eye. Lady called him the Tertium Quid. In those early days he was about the only friend we had, and he was a friend in more ways than one, too.

You see, the idea of being Lady Jane's husband had a certain snobbish influence on me, even after I got my lesson in social values from Mrs. Dexter. It didn't seem exactly right for Lady Jane's husband to be writing advertisements about canned milk or cut plug and taking orders from two or three perfectly unimportant people. I kept thinking about it until one day I forgot that Dennison was my economic despot and told him rather more about himself than he could stand listening to. I went home without a job that night, feeling pleased at being my own master until I'd remember that a master has to rustle up the payroll every Saturday, when I'd have a queer coldness in the back of my neck. By that time the four hundred in the bank had dribbled away and we owed a few little bills for groceries and meat and ice. Forty a week isn't a lot for two people, especially if one of them has been carefully taught to act as if having money accumulate was a kind of reproach. Not that Lady Jane didn't turn in and help like the peach she is. She did miracles with that forty—but she had a lot to learn.

It was a bit of luck that I'd taken a flier or two at fiction while I was at Dennison's. I'd sold three stories to one of the cheap magazines, and the editor had written for more. I hated the idea of starting out with my hat in my hand looking for another job, worse, probably, than the one I'd just forfeited. I couldn't see Lady Jane's husband doing that, somehow. And Lady stiffened up my spine for a try at the free-lancing game. I rented a typewriter and went to it. Lady Jane used to sit at the window while I worked, sewing painfully and always ready to listen.

Luck played with us. I sold a dozen short stories that first month and made more than I'd ever earned in two months before. It began to look as if there'd be enough for the three of us by the time we exchanged our duet for the trio. We paid up our bills and ran up twice as many. We moved out of the cheap little flat where Bill and I'd lived and took a house in Montclair that cost twice the rent. That meant quite a bit of furniture, but we took it for granted that I'd do better each month, and didn't worry.

Then I began to discover what most writers of my sort inevitably learn soon after they take to fiction in earnest. Every man has a story or two in his system, ideas he's lived with, thought over, gradually smoothed and shaped until it doesn't take a great deal of skill to put them on paper. You'll find such stories in almost any issue of any magazine, signed by names you never saw before and never will again.

After the obvious ideas are used the real test faces your young writer. If he's made of stern stuff he'll fight his way past the crisis and be the better for the struggle; if he's not—you won't see his name again, that's all. I ran into my fight during the second month. It was eleven weeks before I earned another penny, and during that time Lady Jane and I lived on Bill's loans. I think Bill took a sublimated

kind of pleasure in the knowledge that his plebeian money was actually buying food and paying rent for Lady Jane Dexter-Judson. He encouraged me to fight it out, rather to my surprise, for like most newspaper men he hadn't much use for freelancers.

"It's worth trying, Dan," he'd say. "You may have it in you to do good stuff. And it would be more—more fitting for you to follow a purely artistic calling. There is an aristocracy of the arts which corresponds closely to that of birth!" And this from the very man who six months before would have said the word Art as if it tasted like a damaged egg!

Thanks to Bill we stuck it out, Lady Jane and I, and after a pretty bad time of it I caught on again, permanently, now. By the time Shirley put in her appearance we'd paid Bill and accumulated a comfortable little surplus. From then on everything was smooth sailing. We always had a little more than we needed to live on, and, by imperceptible degrees our idea of living advanced a pace or two behind our income.

Bill took almost a proprietary interest in Shirley from the time she could only wiggle in her bassinet. He discovered signs of her descent in her howls, which were rather lusty ones, to my notion, for a simon-pure aristocrat. When she cut her first tooth he regarded this precocity as a confirmation of his theory that blood always tells, and her ability to utter a dozen words by the time she was a year and a half absolutely convinced him that no man who has the welfare of his unborn progeny at heart should look for wife any lower than the very top shelf in the social pantry.

When Shirley was four and Bill was still wagging his head over her continual confirmations of his doctrines I made a lucky strike with a play I'd been ashamed to father and which ran for an astonishing number of performances under a pen-name I'd used for my cheaper stuff right along. The royalties—which by some miracle I actually collected—made a pretty respectable foundation for something like wealth. We gave up our Montclair house and bought a cottage in the South, where we missed the joys of New York winters for the first time—in my career, at least. I began to play golf with Lady Jane, who painfully nursed me through the earlier and more virulent stages of the disease and, by carefully mussing up an occasional putt, succeeded in getting me to a point at which I could beat her now and again. Bill, who came down to visit us, was simply delighted at this evidence of dawning gentility on my part. He found that quite a number of people whose names were double-starred in the registry-books wintered in the same general vicinity, and labored with us to cultivate them—for Shirley's sake.

"The child has a birth-right," he said solemnly. "You have no right to cheat her of it. In fifteen years or so she'll be marrying. You want her to marry in her own class, surely?"

"She will," said Lady Jane calmly. Bill remembered and flushed.

"I know—but—"

"Bill," said Lady Jane, "if Shirley should grow up the kind of a child to marry one of the perfect little gentlemen you've got in mind, we'll try to bear up under it. But we'd about as soon have her bring a chronic case of measles into the family. Forget it."

Nevertheless, when we went back north in the spring we delighted Bill by taking a cottage on the North Shore where there was a perfect pestilence of eager ex-democrats. Morven happened to suit us in the matter of climate, and the golf course is superfine. We liked the house, too, though it was a little bigger than we needed. We went there in spite of the neighbors, but Bill was convinced that we had begun at last to see the light. He was horrified when he spent a week-end with us without meeting one of the self-select gang who rubbed elbows with us. Cross-questioning Lady Jane he found that they'd held out the olive-

branch by calling and that, when she got around to it, she'd do the decent thing by returning the ceremonial visits. Only the discovery that Shirley played with the little Meiklejohn twins consoled him.

About this time he had a bit of luck. A news-syndicate picked him out for its London branch and he dropped out of our existence for the summer and the next winter, except for letters which told us about the excruciatingly suitable people he'd met over there. He'd always give them their full titles when he referred to them first and subsequently mention them by clubby nicknames. "Yesterday week I went down to Kent to stop with The Honourable"—he never overlooked the *u*, nowadays—"Algernon Sidney Stokes-Pogis, and his wife, who was, as you know, the sixth daughter of Sir Silas Hawkins, Bart. Algie is top-hole and Muriel's no end of a jolly good sort." We used to read his letters aloud and mouth the titles sonorously, like one of the butlers you see in society plays. The funny part of it was that we still liked Bill as much as ever. His snobbery was something we simply couldn't associate with him, like a wart on a friend's nose, you know.

IV

We'd come back to Morven for our second summer. The season there scarcely began before July, but we opened the house in May, as soon as it began to get too warm for comfort down at Pinecrest. We had the links almost to ourselves and after the crowded courses at Pinecrest it was simply glorious to be able to play your second without waiting five minutes for the pair in front to hole out. We'd just done thirty-six and were pretty well fagged when we got Bill's letter. It was addressed to Lady Jane and she read it first, of course. Then, quite calmly, she announced.

"Bill's engaged." That's Lady Jane's way. Most women, given a tidbit of news like that, would dangle it for ten minutes and make a fellow jump for it like a tantalized pup, but Lady Jane doesn't.

"Who?" I demanded. "Don't tell me it's The Honourable Millicent, twelfth daughter of Sir Simon de Smythe, Bart."

"Her name's Pauline Baxter," said Lady. "Bill says she comes of an old Pennsylvania family, the Berks County Baxters, in fact. She's lived abroad, mostly. He met her on the steamer. He's in New York."

We exchanged glances. "I wonder what she's like," said Lady Jane's.

"I'm afraid to think," said mine. There was a pause.

"Does he say anything about—about his plans?" I asked. Lady Jane turned the page.

"He wants us to ask her out here," she announced. "It seems she came over with friends who've been called west suddenly and left her alone at their hotel. Bill doesn't approve of that, I gather from his tone."

We debated the matter oracularly. "She may be all right," I said hopefully. Lady shrugged her shoulders.

"Bill describes her as patrician to her finger-tips," she quoted. "I'm afraid. But we'll have to ask her. We can't go back on Bill."

We motored into town the next morning and called at the Plaza where Bill's patrician was stopping. She kept us waiting twenty minutes before having us up to her suite. One look was enough. It was the worst, all right, only worse than anything we'd expected.

Pauline proved to be the logical perfection of the type you see in *Mode*. She was a girl, of course, and not absolutely bad-looking, underneath her disguise, but your first impression was a costumer's mannequin in the act of exhibiting a new and extreme model at the Paris races. I've no skill at technical description of women's clothes, but Lady Jane, who surprisingly knows quite a lot about the subject, tells me that Pauline wore on that occasion a gown of rose cloth, braided to death

with rose and silver and girdled with three straps of rose suede. Perhaps this conveys the proper impression to the initiate. To my eye Pauline looked like a minor character in some very light opera, dressed for the military number in a trick uniform of red and gray, the skirts coming an inch or two below the knee and a gaspish amount of pectoral display at the top. She wore pink stockings which had a rather startling effect, on first inspection, and just below her left eye was a bit of black court-plaster cut in the shape of a P. Her hair was skinned back so that her eyebrows were half way up her forehead. Her manner was that of a slightly bored princess receiving visiting royalty rather lower in the scale.

"*Sa* pleased," she told us. "Percy's told me no end of delightful things about you, you know. I've been really quite keen on meeting you."

"Percy?" Lady Jane says I grunted the question. The truth is that I had a sudden notion we'd got into the wrong suite. Pauline laughed in a singularly unmusical falsetto.

"Just *my* name for him," she explained. "William is really too—too—*quite* too, you know. I've always meant to marry a man named Percy and so—" she waved her hands to complete the sentence. I was waiting for her on the next remark. I'd written too many reams of kitchen-read fiction not to know the end of that sentence. "*Voila*," said Percy's Pauline.

V

We took Pauline out with us that afternoon. Bill—or Percy—was unable to get away from his business affairs in time to come along, but made himself properly grateful per telephone and promised to catch the five-forty. He hemmed and hawed a bit after this was settled and finally got it off his chest about like this:

"I want you and Lady Jane to play up this time," he told me. "I—I've been telling Pauline about you, you see, and I've given her to understand that you're both the very best—"

"Thanks. We'll show her what we think of you, Bill." I was touched. He was afraid he might have overstated our devotion to him, the good old muddler! But that wasn't his trouble at all.

"Oh, that part of it's all right. I know how I stand with you two. But—but you're the only friends of mine that Pauline's met, and I—I'm rather keen on her getting the best possible impression of you. Of course I know you too well to let appearances misrepresent you, but she doesn't. Couldn't you—well, live up to yourself while she's with you?"

I began to see light. "You want us to pile on the dog, is that it? Society stuff? Dinner-clothes, buffet-breakfasts, Oxford accent and all that sort of thing?" I was sore. My voice showed it. Bill was humble.

"It's a joke to you, Dan, but it comes pretty near life and death to me. If Pauline finds out that there's really no class to me, I'm gone. I—I've let her think I'm a frightful swell and you and Lady Jane are the only evidence I've got to offer. She—she doesn't know you, and if you—"

I couldn't help being sorry for him. He was deadly serious about it, simply nuts over his girl and frightened silly for fear she'd see through his bluff. So I set his mind at rest as best I could and rejoined Lady Jane and Pauline for lunch. It was no surprise to me to discover that most of the things Pauline cared for weren't to be had, and the substitutes she accepted were all wrong. She had the waiter almost in tears before we struggled through. Then we waited an hour for her to change into motor togs—I wish I could stop to describe the creations I've miscalled by that scandalous word—and at last we started.

My car's a hand-me-down model, built in lots of a thousand and sold, on the instalment plan, for nine-seventy-two, f. o. b. Kokomo. Naturally I drive it myself. Pauline thought the

Dimson "adorably crude" and told us so. Also she found my chauffeurless state "too duckily quaint for words." Although Lady Jane was behind me I was distinctly aware that these remarks woke no enthusiastic response in her. During the entire run to Morven Lady Jane and I maintained a sympathetic conversation by the wireless system which grows up between husbands and wives of our description. Pauline enlivened the journey by sprightly narratives of her European triumphs, by involved allusions to the height and grandeur of the family tree appertaining to the Berks County Baxters, varied at times by sage meditations upon natural philosophy, arts, politics and kindred topics. I quote a few of these choice thoughts.

"The most ignorant Italian peasant appreciates art—and loves it."

"It isn't so much the heat, you know, as the humidity."

"If I could only write stories the way I tell them I'd be no end of a literary sensation."

"I'd rather have children and dogs like me than grown-ups. You can believe in *them*."

There was talk, too, of Percy, in a tone which subtly conveyed the impression that his shortcomings were accurately sensed and estimated by the lady of his heart. Her inflection was invariably condescending, indulgent, as one who says, "a rough diamond," or "isn't it a shame he drinks?" By the time we reached Morven I was in a mood for manslaughter, and the thought that we were sacredly bound to abet Bill in the insane endeavor to wish a lifetime of this upon himself oppressed my soul hideously. Lady Jane escorted Pauline to her quarters. I heard some of her comments before their voices died away on the stairs.

"What a dear little box of a place!" Pauline said.

"It's too big for us," remarked Lady Jane, on whom Pauline was reacting to produce an unwonted firmness of foot on the solid earth.

"It's simply alive with the atmosphere of home," cooed our guest. "One knows intuitively that everything in it was chosen to *live* with."

"I don't know," said Lady Jane. "We rent the furniture with the house."

Lady Jane, without my knowledge of Bill's ambitions, was permitting herself to display a lamentable want of social polish, but I couldn't warn her. As it happened that insufferable ass Alec Minto chose this particular minute to strike me for a subscription to a horse show the colony wanted to pull off a bit later, and when I gave it to him, in the hope of getting rid of him, he hung about endlessly, chatting with Lady Jane in his best Newport manner till Pauline appeared. Alec approved of her instantly and obviously, and she expanded in the sunshine of his smile until my hands trembled with the itch to do murder.

"I always dread coming back to America," she informed him. "In Europe things are so much better understood."

"It's a rotten hole," agreed Alec, elegantly. "Rotten. Don't blame you."

"It's—it's so *crude*," pursued Pauline, with the air of Columbus reporting his discovery to Ferdinand and Isabella. "No class distinctions worthy of the name. Why, the last time I was here I had to give up going to church because of the tradespeople who couldn't be avoided there. Fancy sharing a pew with one's butcher!"

"It *is* embarrassing," said Lady Jane pleasantly. "I remember when we lived in Montclair and our butcher took up the collection. I was always afraid to put in more than a quarter, when I hadn't paid his bill for two months."

A deadly silence greeted this dreadful remark. I made frantic signs to Lady, but there are limitations to the family wireless. Lady knew there was something in the wind, but that was as far as she got. Meanwhile Pauline prattled on dauntlessly. She told us her views of domestic economy. Anything less than five servants would be utterly unthinkable—English servants, of course. There were no good ones

in America. Two cars would be enough, as she didn't care for appearances—good cars, of course—a Rolls-Royce or a Simplex.

"There's better value in a Dimson six at nine-seventy-two," observed Lady Jane. "Saves gas and tires, too."

Pauline hastily introduced domestic decorations as a less dangerous topic. She meant to have her house done in the Chinese-Futurist style—everything black and silver, you know. Black rugs and black upholstery against a background of dull-silver walls. . . ."

"You'd better not keep any white cats, then," said Lady Jane. I could see that her lower jaw protruded slightly. Even Pauline laughed at this, and Alec, after a proper moment of near-British hesitation, emitted a mirthless haw-haw which inspired me with a sudden desire to brain him. It was the timely reflection that this operation was already all but accomplished in Alec's case which comforted me. He hung about till it was time to dress for dinner, but Lady Jane refused to construe his deliberation as a hint. He got a drink of Scotch, which he referred to as a peg, but departed without an invitation to dine with us. In our first instant of marital seclusion the storm broke.

"She nearly fainted when she found we didn't have separate rooms. . . . 'how *deliciously mid-Victorian,* dear.'" Lady Jane's lips shut grimly. "She doesn't care for Percy except as a sort of domestic pet. 'He's so comfortable, you know, but, dear soul, there's not a thrill in him.' She's marrying him because he won't distract her attention from interesting men—the kind of men who won't look at a woman unless she's safely married, you know. Darling, wicked-eyed, frothy men, dear! . . . Frothy men!"—Lady Jane brightened. "I suppose Alec Minto's frothy."

"Lady," I said solemnly, *"we've* got to froth and bubble all the time she's here. Make up your mind to it. Bill's abject about it—and we can't go back on him." I condensed his outpourings for her. She stopped suddenly in her hair-brushing.

"That's the answer," she snapped. "I didn't see how to put the everlasting jinx on this beautiful little romance, but you've handed me my cue. We'll show Bill up as a member of the common people; we'll be so disgustingly plebeian that she'll refuse to know him before she's been here another day. We'll everlastingly disgrace him—"

"We can't, Lady. Bill wouldn't see it at all. It would look to him as if we'd gone back on him—as if we wouldn't take a bit of trouble on his account. Don't you see that? We can't squash his dream of love in any such fashion. Besides, it's uncertain. She might not hold Bill responsible for his rough-neck friends. We'd only shame him before her, after all his fool bragging about us. The patient who needs the cure is Bill himself, and the best prescription for him is an overdose of his own dope. We'll give him a tummy-full of it; we'll feed him so full of Newport stuff for the next ten days that he'll shy it as long as he lives."

Lady Jane crossed the room in her deliberate impulsiveness, her eyes brightening into the slow glitter that's her battle-signal. She kissed me solemnly.

"Reggie!" she trilled in an excellent counterfeit of Pauline's falsetto, "Reggie, sometimes, you're almost frothy enough to furnish me with a regular thrill. I'm going to call you Reggie from this instant. Dan is, too—too—*quite* too, you know. And I always dreamed of marrying a man named Reggie!"

We resolved ourselves into a committee-of-the-whole and considered ways and means. We'd already paid Pauline and Percy the compliment of getting into dinner clothes. Mine smelt abominably of camphor, I remember. It was too late to do much more than that, beyond sending hurried instructions to Nora to complicate the menu slightly, and exiling Shirley, who usually had her supper with us, to the nursery for the occasion. Shirley was

inclined to be displeased about this and an estimate of "Aunt Pauline," already not too high, lowered visibly.

Bill arrived, full of enthusiasms and society-novel remarks, accompanied by what he referred to as his dunnage, from which he extracted dinner-dress of impeccably modern vintage. I had a word with him as he changed and was reconciled to the ordeal before me at the spectacle of his degeneration. Whether we succeeded in saving him or only vindicated him in the eyes of his lady, it was worth while. He was rather pathetic.

Dinner was, I could see, disappointingly simple to both our guests, but Lady Jane and I atoned for it to some extent by our conversation, which, by agreement, turned exclusively on the late King Edward. I had a hazy notion that after coffee the ladies should vanish, as they always did in the Bertha Clay books of my youth, but Lady Jane vetoed this.

"She'd think that was 'too darlingly mid-Victorian,' too," she declared. "The fancy stunt nowadays is to sit still and smoke with the men. You wait."

So cigarettes were passed around, and instead of the traditional port an acid-eyed Nora served some exotic liqueur which reminded me oddly of a perfume gone wrong in the making. Lady Jane ignited her cigarette languidly, as one to the manner born, and, after a second's hesitation, Pauline followed her lead, rather clumsily. It was the first hint I got of the facts, but it was enough. Percy's Pauline was bluffing. She did *not* belong. Her acquaintance with what her Percy described reverently as the hawt mond—Bill never could learn to pronounce French other than phonetically—was purely literary, like mine. Which, after all, only made matters worse. The real thing is bad enough—the imitation is awful to contemplate. Lady Jane's eyes telegraphed confirmation of my hurried suspicion. I fancied I could detect a minute vibration of her shoulders, on which a sharply defined line of sunburn gave the effect of unintentional exposure.

"I never could smoke E—Egyptians," coughed Pauline, delicately. She dropped her cigarette into her coffee-cup precisely like the heroine of a Robert W. Chambers novel.

Later, thanks to rapid telephoning on Lady Jane's part, Alec Minto dropped in, with his inseparable fellow-sufferer, a weedy youth whose favorite remark was "Ow," pronounced as if he lived with a mild but chronic toothache, and whose name is printed in the social weeklies as Peterby Skagg. Pauline, with a sagacity which stirred my unwilling respect, declined to discuss Newport with these gentlemen, disposing of its pretensions by a slightly wearied statement to the effect that it was hopelessly American, after all. Both concurred respectfully. I could see that their opinion of Pauline mounted. Neither Mr. Minto nor Mr. Skagg is frantically welcome at Newport, though, in my ignorance, I was not aware of this at the time.

Pauline, descanting airily of Britain and the Continent, of the Irish season, of shootings and races and week-ends, held her audience rapt and spell-bound, especially Bill, who gazed upon her with the air of one contemplating a priestess at her shrine. Lady Jane and I communicated ocularly. It was a delightful evening—a pleasant time was had by all, in fact. But Bill was not wholly satisfied, even with this. We sat up a bit after Lady Jane and Pauline had departed, and I could see that something lay on his chest. I ordered him to unburden.

"You and Lady Jane are perfect trumps, you know," he began, diffidently.

"Yes," I said. "And all that sort of thing, too. Proceed."

He was not to be diverted by banter. "But—but there's a certain something missing," he went on, "a—a—"

"A *je-ne-sais-quoi?*" I suggested. "Quite so. I felt it myself. But what?"

Bill had the grace to blush. "I—I'm afraid I gave Pauline the idea that you

—that society in America was a bit rapid," he confessed, defiant in spite of his natural embarrassment. "I—I rather prepared her to be—to be shocked, you know. Of course she wouldn't be, but I'm afraid she'll suspect—"

"I take you, Percy," I assured him gravely. "Ow, *quite*, you know. Say no more. The lamentable innocuity to which you refer shall be shattered to flinders from this instant. We shall demonstrate the decadence of our bourgeois virtues to—to the queen's own taste. Give us a look."

"It's a joke to you," defended Bill, "but—"

"I know about the life-and-death thing, Percy. Say no more."

"A bit rapid?" repeated Lady Jane, later, a dangerous glint in her eye. "Leave it to me, Reggie. I have a feeling that my conduct henceforward is going to be quite too *quaintly* terrible. Leave it to me!"

VI

We got in a round next morning by getting up at seven-thirty and sneaking out the kitchen gate, and by the time we'd finished Lady Jane was feeling her oats again. Two hours in a nippy morning are bad medicine for masquerades. We were having a languid second-edition breakfast when Pauline appeared, in an eye-filling affair of wide, vertical stripes, this time, abbreviated at top and bottom in order to expand horizontally to awe-inspiring dimensions. She was suitably exuberant in spirits, radiant as to face. Bill, who, I more than suspect, had been up and dressed for hours, waiting the proper time to descend, followed her into the dining-room before she was fairly in her seat.

"After all," bubbled the maiden, sprightlily, "there's nothing quite so refreshing as a cold tub, is there?"

Lady Jane's good resolutions weakened suddenly. She made, on that occasion, a rejoinder which I shall always envy. I am only waiting, in fact, for some unwary enthusiast to pull that cold-tub remark on me in order to plagiarize it. It is deathless, that speech.

"I always brush my teeth, too," said Lady Jane.

After breakfast the onslaught on the mid-Victorian virtues began in earnest. I was a little apprehensive, knowing Lady Jane rather intimately by this time, but my vague fears had prepared me for nothing like what transpired. We'd no sooner strayed to the verandah when Lady turned on me peevishly.

"I wish you'd have the tact to efface yourself," she remarked. "I haven't seen dear old Bill for ages and I've been saving up a choice collection of things to tell him. Take Miss Baxter down to the beach and show her the jellyfish or something."

She rested one hand in proprietary fashion on Bill's shoulder and leaned affectionately against his arm. Miss Baxter stiffened and her smile lacked conviction. But, as we obeyed orders, she squared accounts by possessing herself carelessly of my hand, so that we proceeded down the walk toward the beach in the artless fashion of two light-hearted children. I looked back as we came to the stairway at the edge of the bluff and experienced an unreasonable resentment at the sight of Lady Jane seated on the arm of Bill's chair, playing mischievously with a rebellious strand of his hair. I wondered whether Bill was enjoying himself in the midst of this aristocratic impropriety. As for Miss Baxter, her chin suggested the child who declares "you're twice what you called me!" Her conversation lacked its usual exuberance.

When we climbed the stair, after perhaps an half hour of this, I was aware of an instant change in her attitude toward me. She clutched my sleeve cosily, chattering enthusiastically about the privilege of meeting me in a tone plainly meant to be audible on the verandah. It was wasted, however, for Bill and Lady Jane had disap-

peared. We went, by common but unvoiced consent, in search of them, finally discovering them on the bluff walk, where Lady Jane still maintained the *entente cordiale* rather too obviously to please me. Bill, too, seemed somewhat reconciled by this time, though a trifle apprehensive in his glances toward me. It proved impossible to dissolve the quartette until lunch-time, but Lady Jane seemed more or less unaware of my presence, even so. She and Bill whispered a good deal, and Lady Jane laughed delightedly over certain furtive remarks of her own. I felt, myself, that the appearance of exalted station might be carried to unnecessary extremes, but I got no chance to expostulate.

Alec Minto came to lunch, by previous arrangement. This simplified matters appreciably, by releasing me from my involuntary role of substitute. Directly after luncheon Alec was gratified to be chosen by Pauline as the companion of her afternoon's excursioning. They vanished along the bluff walk in animated converse, leaving Bill to the tender mercies of Lady Jane again. I observed, however, that no sooner had the other pair rounded the angle in the walk which cut them off from our view than Lady Jane's interest in Bill resumed its normally philosophic friendliness. She left us together shortly, on the plea of housewifely cares. Bill was troubled.

"I—I'm afraid I'm not wholly suited for this—this sort of thing, Dan," he confessed. "I—I've got a streak of middle-class stodginess in me that rebels against—against—"

"Against this sort of thing," I finished for him. "Don't give in to it, Bill. Fight against it—live it down." I was delighted, of course, at this sign of convalescence, but I couldn't resist the temptation to rag him a bit. He took me quite seriously, however. He brightened at once.

"That's right," he agreed. "I can educate myself up to these things, in time. I'll stick it out, Dan. Thanks. You're a good—"

"Bill, if you refer to me as a good sort I swear I'll abandon you to your horrid fate. Too much is enough."

"I was going to say you're a good scout," he said humbly.

"That's better," I said. "I am."

He went off for a solitary walk. I knew that his eye would be on Alec for the rest of the afternoon; and went in search of Lady Jane. She was having a nap, but woke up and grinned at me delightedly.

"Ow, Reggie," she remarked.

"It's beginning to take," I told her. "Bill's entertaining grave doubts as to his qualifications for the butterfly life. What did you do to him?"

"Nothing, you ninny. As soon as you were out of sight I relapsed into my middle-class virtuosity and sedately discussed matrimony with Bill till I saw you coming after us. Pauline's considerably peeved. Did you get on with her?"

"I've no illusions. I was being used as a retaliatory implement, beyond any doubt. About Alec I'm not so sure. He comes rather nearer her beau ideal, doesn't he?"

"You've got her number, haven't you? You've surely spotted the fact that she's not the real thing?"

"My dear Lady! Have I lived with you these long years—"

"I mean she's not even a real climber," interrupted Lady. "She's read a lot of truck about high-life and she's doing her little darnedest to live up to it. I'd give a dime for a look at the ancestral palace back in Berks County. Poor Bill!"

"Don't worry. Bill's on the mend. A little more of this and he'll see daylight again. It's the best thing that could have happened."

Lady Jane composed herself anew for slumber. "There's a little more coming, all right," she promised. "Run away and play, now. I've got a hard day's work ahead of *me*."

I should have been prepared for the worst, after that. But I wasn't. Alec came back with Pauline and stopped for dinner, looking no end delighted

with himself. Pauline ministered to his self-esteem sedulously. Bill, struggling nobly against his middle-class prejudices and instincts, contrived to act as if he had no least objection to the sudden intimacy between the lady of his heart and the offshoot of aristocracy. He plucked up sufficient spirit, in fact, to return Lady Jane's leads in very workmanlike fashion. After dinner Peterby Skagg arrived and, being bidden thereto by Lady Jane, he and Pauline played bridge against Alec and me. Miss Baxter's mind was clearly not on the cards. Bill and Lady Jane were in the butler's pantry conducting a series of experiments with new and fearsome sub-variants of cocktail blendings. Occasionally they appeared with samples for our opinion. I was shocked to observe a distinctly alcoholic hilarity in Lady Jane's speech and behavior, a detail which was not at all lost on Pauline, either. Bill displayed traces of exhilaration likewise manifest to us both. The farce, I felt, was going a bit too far. But Lady Jane was in command. Mine but to do or die. I did.

Bridge palled. Pauline, her eyes a trifle too bright, I thought, took the subjugated Alec to a far corner where their heads were rather closer together than necessary. I did my best to entertain the bereft Mr. Skagg, which proved less difficult than might be imagined, all that was required being a sympathetic expression of countenance during a detailed recital of Mr. Skagg's troubles in finding a decent tailor in New York. Bill and Lady Jane, meanwhile, evolved a combination of liquors which found general approval, particularly with Pauline and Alec. Pauline also discovered that it was quite possible to endure E—Egyptians. I shall never forget the expression of Bill's face as he watched her ignite one for the abject Mr. Minto.

The phonograph was started. There was dancing, Mr. Minto justifying his existence for the first time by revealing a truly remarkable agility, with Pauline as his partner. They had just finished a particularly deft performance of some unidentified step when I observed the girl's face to harden into a momentary flash of wrath. Following her eyes I saw Bill, lately emerged from the butler's pantry. The right shoulder of his dinner-coat was visibly dusted with some white substance like flour. It may have been coincidence, but at that precise moment Lady Jane, appearing behind Bill, lifted readjusting finger-tips to a slightly askew coiffure. The inference was so irresistible that I had a flash of unreasoning anger before my understanding asserted itself. From that moment Pauline seemed unconscious of Bill's presence and her behavior, if open to criticism before, now overpassed the bounds. She permitted Mr. Minto to kiss her, when he uttered his farewells, as nonchalantly as one born to the very heart of that society pictured in the most popular magazines. Bill's face, as he witnessed this proof of his lady's pinnacular exaltitude, was a study in conflicting emotions.

Lady Jane, still behaving as if under subtle stimulations, carried Pauline away to her room without giving opportunity for recriminations. This seemed an oversight to me. I should have let them fight it out at once, the issue of battle being so plainly in evidence. Bill was singularly silent under my casual conversation and went off to bed without unfolding his heart. But I could see that his cure was far advanced.

"I guess we've put it across," was Lady Jane's greeting. She was like ice. "And Bill's doing some ground-and-lofty thinking about now, or I'm a poor mind-reader. They'll part by mutual consent and live happily ever after. But it's been rather a job."

"Why didn't you let 'em scrap it out tonight?" I cavilled. "They were both in a fighting mood. The night brings counsel—maybe they'll patch it up in the morning."

"There's more than one kind of counsel," remarked Lady Jane, yawning inelegantly. "If they'd had a rousing good quarrel tonight they'd have been sorry for it by daylight. As it

is they'll both lie awake making up bitter speeches to say when they meet at breakfast. Don't meddle, Reggie. I'm running this show."

She was wrong, as it turned out, in one detail at least. When I got down in the morning Bill was gone. He'd left me a note, with his apologies to Lady Jane. She'd understand, he said. He'd come to the conclusion that it was impossible to cross social barriers; he realized, now, that his training and ancestry unfitted him for the kind of life Pauline lived. They'd be frightfully unhappy together. So he'd given her up. He'd left a note for her. And he'd never forget how nobly Lady Jane and I had stood by him.

VII

We were still congratulating each other when Pauline appeared. She was dressed in a simple, rather cheap-looking suit, utterly unlike our previous conceptions of her taste in dress, and she looked amazingly well in it. Her hair was differently arranged, too, and the patch at her eye was conspicuously absent. She had not slept well. And she had been crying.

"Where—where's Bill?" she asked, a trifle unsteadily.

"He's gone into town," said Lady Jane, rather kindly, I thought. "He walked to the station and took the eight-fifteen. Did you find a note—"

Pauline put her head down on the table and howled. There is no other word for the mournful ululations she emitted amid the dishes. Lady Jane and I stared at her stupidly, at one another, back at her. Then Lady's natural instincts asserted themselves. She had her arm around the girl's shaking shoulders before I quite realized that she'd moved.

"Don't, dear—it's all for the best, really. Bill's not a bit like what you thought him. He's not your sort at all, you know. He's our kind—you would never have been happy with him—or he with you—"

Pauline's howls stopped suddenly. She sat bolt upright, facing us with frank hostility in her tear-sodden countenance.

"He *is* my sort," she flashed. "He *is*—do you think I don't know? He's no more like you and your set than—than I am. You—you've dazzled him—poisoned him, that's all. He fairly worships you and tries to be like you, but inside he's as honest and sensible and lovable as anybody that ever lived. It's all your fault, do you hear? Every bit of it!"

We stared more stupidly than ever. She caught her breath.

"I shouldn't have tried to compromise with his snobbish ideas," she stormed on. "I ought to have told him right out that I wasn't like you. But—but I was afraid. He—he talked so much about you, about Family and Birth and Blood that I didn't dare tell him the truth. I tried to pretend—I bought all those horrible clothes in New York just to come out here. I let him think I belonged in this idiotic, snobby little clique he thinks is so tremendously important. I bluffed and bluffed and bluffed, trying to live up to his ideals. And it's spoiled everything."

She relapsed into sniffs of recrudescent grief. "How could I tell him that my father began as breaker-boy in the mine he owns? How could I let him see that I was a rank outsider—and glad of it? He'd never have cared for me if he hadn't taken it for granted that I was a perfectly frightful swell. I—I thought I could bluff it through. I thought he'd never realize I wasn't the real thing until—"

Lady Jane was already at the telephone, cool-headedly calling the station. It still wanted five minutes of eight-fifteen. Bill seems fairly well convinced, at present, that his wife *is* the real thing—the very realest, in fact.

I LOATHE WOMEN

By Arthur Telfair

I LOATHE women.

. . . . . .

They stumble over nothing and cling to you when you catch them in your arms.

They wear gowns that reveal their white throats and shoulders, and then they hold your eyes with theirs when they are near you.

They pretend to meet you as man to man—in the open, at golf; in the drawing room, with cigarettes—and laugh when you tremble at their touch.

You blurt out your troubles and they sympathize.

They are so vastly more fascinating than your wife.

. . . . . .

I loathe women.

HOW MANY WOMEN TALL AND FAIR

By Harry Kemp

HOW many women tall and fair
Have dropped to death since Helen's time
Like snowflakes fading down the air,
Or petals shed before their prime.

The ripened lip, the breathing cheek
Turn dust the wind lifts on and here,—
I see Death, pitying, pause to speak,
Then, speechless, turn to hide a tear.

ONE can always determine a gentleman by his methods of procedure. A gentleman never condemns the woman in a scandal until he has seen whether she is beautiful or not.

BEAUTY: Something which starts of its own accord and ends in a human paint factory.

A MIRACLE

By Laurence Vail

HOW tired she seems—the little typist, so dully contemplating the plate of Irish stew before her—too tired to think, too tired to breathe, and far too tired to eat. It is not possible to think of her as anything but tired. How strain one's mind to the imagining of any casual or ardent suitor whispering more than one tender nothing in her ear? To be regarded as she regards stew must hold back even a drunken wooer. And surely no other expression can ever flit across her pallid face; anger, not even fretfulness, can liven those dead eyes.

It seems the symbol of her life—this Irish stew, the symbol of her attitude towards the world. One has the dreary, forlorn feeling that nothing in either space or time will ever make her change. So must she pass—indifferent, through the thickest, loudest turmoil, blind to the city's whirling carnival, deaf to the snarl and song upon the street. Thus must she always pass—unheeding and unheeded.

No less weary and inanimate are the other lunchers in the restaurant.

A voluminous lady, too blonde of hair, too pink of cheek, sits huddled up before an anæmic omelette, neglecting the erect attitude which might impart to her vast figure a certain dignity and portliness. Mrs. McIron Jones, militant suffragette, notorious for the ferocity of her language and the fire of her complexion, appears meeker than her absent hen-pecked husband as her vacuous eyes peruse the bill of fare. No titter rises from a table occupied by two gawky, healthy school girls. That prettiest and naughtiest of chorus girls—Kitty O'Hara, hurts you by her appearance of dowdy respectability. And as for Cecile Lespinard, New York's gayest and most recent butterfly, eighteen years of age and heroine of as many tender scandals, you can hardly tell her apart from Hetty Smith, her darlingest and plainest friend.

An atmosphere of thick fatigue oppresses the entire room, felt even by the lanky Ellen who drags her heavy feet across the room, also by the peevish, untidy Mabel at the desk. It is as if a curtain of dull, numbing fog has fallen between the restaurant and the busy seething world outside—a curtain more impenetrable than walls of steel; as if the electric blood current which passes through every breathing being and makes one cosmos of all folk had been suddenly disconnected from this one room.

They seem—these twenty or thirty women, so many purposeless atomatons. One cannot imagine why they sit at tables. Still less can one imagine why they eat.

Then—

A rush of air, as though a door had been opened somewhere.

The large lady sits up in her chair, splendid with her bust erect.

Two school girls blush and look self-conscious, then giggle and whisper sillily to each other.

Of a sudden you understand why Mrs. McIron Jones strikes such terror into the hearts of little men, why her absent husband always looks so very tired.

Behold Kitty, naughty Kitty, managing to eat soup and to look saucy.

There! Cecile Lespinard has passed a word concerning her to Hetty Smith

—a word with a sting within it, for her pretty lips curve with sly disdain.

Ellen—slender Ellen (who is the fool who called her lanky?) trips nimbly from one table to another, exchanging rapid confidential glances with the alert Mabel at the desk.

But sweeter far than all of them is the little tired typist. Tired! She is not tired but wistful. See the pretty glow of colour playing over her soft white cheeks. How many must pause to try to press her, she shyly, gently eluding them! Curious, almost grotesque, is it to see her eating Irish stew. She should be toying with shrimps.

The cloud—if ever cloud there was—has vanished. What talk is this of fog, of impenetrable walls? All cheers, diverts, and warms. Every being tingles to the same life tune. It is one with other rooms—this room; one with the city, one with the world, one with the street, a particle of lively cosmos.

But why are they so self-conscious these twenty, thirty women? And what has brought them so abruptly into life?

A man has come into the room.

INSPIRATION

By Mary MacMillan

I AM a little house of glass
Beside the long highroad,
And many people as they pass
See not my wee abode,

Or, looking through, see other things
Beyond, in loveliness,
A little faun, a falcon's wings,
A mother cat's caress.

But when your love rays touch on me
I glow and gleam and win
The eyes of all, they think they see
A flaming fire within.

WHEN a woman's husband is satisfactory to her, she is not satisfied until she has nagged him until he is unsatisfactory.

A CHAIN, the copy-books say, is no stronger than its weakest link. Thus no woman is greater than her dullest lover.

A WOMAN who keeps a diary whispers secrets into her hair.

THE WHITE CARNATION

By Julia Lawrence Shafter

I

I SUPPOSE if I had not known Dick Aleshire's first wife I should have been more minded to admire his second one. But Lily Aleshire was not easily forgotten. She was so vital—so magnetically alive — that one could hardly believe she was not still here somewhere—gone away for a little, or waiting in the next room.

Dick's friends were tremendously fond of her. She had made their house very pleasant to us—always giving little dinners, remembering our favorite dishes, prescribing for our ailments of mind or body, beseeching us—quite in vain, of course—to leave off smoking, to be "good boys." She mothered us—she who was only twenty-three, and closed her sweet eyes to this world without ever having borne a child.

Well, we were all frightfully broken up over it, and Dick was a changed man—not himself for a year or two. He did not drop back into the clubs, as we had expected. After business hours he shut himself up in his lonely house. I noticed that when he met any of the old set his jaw tightened, and he glanced away—couldn't bear even to look at one of us.

It was about the end of the second year that he invited me to dine with him. He seemed fidgety, and I thought that he had something on his mind. After dinner we smoked in the library, and I saw that Sargent's beautiful portrait of Lily had been brought in there from the drawing-room, where it used to hang.

"Fine, isn't it?" he said, seeing my eyes rest upon it. "I always sit here in the evenings . . . The light is better, too . . ."

There was a little break between the clauses, which I filled in.

The picture was so amazingly lifelike that it was almost as if Lily herself were standing a few steps above, looking down at us. Her eyes seemed to follow our every movement. One sees such eyes in portraits. I know so little about art—I'm a lawyer—that I don't know how the painter chaps produce this effect, or whether, indeed, they wish to produce it. I suppose their brushes run away with them sometimes, like the tools of other workmen.

At all events, there was that sweet, bright, yet tranquil gaze persistently resting on us, move about as we would. It seemed to me uncanny. I felt like a brute sitting there, puffing my cigar—not saying a word to her. And I fancied Dick must have had the same feeling.

Once or twice he opened his lips, as if to voice something out of the ordinary, but he closed them again, without having spoken.

What it was that he had on his mind I learned about a week later. He seemed to find it easier to merge it with business affairs.

He came into my office, and said:

"Gates, I've got to make a new will shortly. I'm going to marry Miss Fothergill."

You could have knocked me down with a feather! If it had been—oh, anyone but Constance Fothergill! Not to say she wasn't a fine girl—woman, rather. She was older than Lily by a few years. We all knew Constance so

well—or thought we knew her—that I think we had rather ceased speculating about her. I suppose most of us fancied she would go on dancing, riding, golfing, till, all of a sudden, we should hear of her engagement to some man outside our circle — someone upon whom her charms—and she had them —would fall as a thunderbolt, and sweep him off his feet. Novelty is a tremendous factor in love affairs, and Constance was no novelty to us. However, she had an air with her, and we would all have admitted that she ought to make a decent marriage some day. But Dick Aleshire!—after Lily!

II

I SAW a good deal of the Aleshires after their marriage. They often invited me to dinner, and it was curious—and a bit painful—to see how different they were from Lily's dinners. Same people, too, for the most part, same dinner service, same cook; but different atmosphere—formal, cold. The wine might have been ice-water, for all the hilarity it produced.

Constance had an alien air, like a cat in a strange garret. She did precious little to entertain us—would sit far back in a deep chair, sticking out her slender feet, looking from one to another of us with her narrow dark eyes, putting in a word now and then, just sufficient to keep the conversational ball rolling, but not enough to warm it up appreciably.

The result was that we left as soon as we decently could; and sometimes, when she and Dick were seeing us off in the hall, I have seen a look come into her face that was far from flattering to a departing guest—a revelation not alone of the hostess, but of the woman. She wished to be alone with Dick; she was—and I don't know why I should have believed her incapable of it—passionately in love with her husband, passionately determined on a solitude for two.

I noticed it in many ways. Aleshire and Lily had always given of themselves freely to their friends. They liked to make up box parties for theater or opera; and though they had a small car, they seldom used it, because, as Lily said, it was so delightful to pick up friends in the big car. There was nothing of that sort about Constance. Far be it from me to say she was wrong. As—perforce—a student of humanity, I have seen a lot of trouble come from picking up friends.

Once start my so-called mind on an idea, and it has a way of following it up. Not consciously. I would often prefer to drop one of these embryos, but as often it swells into a Frankenstein creation, and pursues me.

Having seen that look on Constance's face, and observed how she and Dick were always alone in a coupé that couldn't have picked up a stray cat, it was inevitable that I should remark the new cook, the new dinner service, the gradual assembling of new guests, the rearrangement of the furniture, sometimes the complete disappearance of a pet table or chair of Lily's.

One evening when I had been dining *en famille* with the Aleshires—for as yet I was favored amidst the slow but inexorable freezing out of old friends —Dick stopped short in the middle of the drawing-room, and said rather sharply:

"Connie, what has become of the cabinet?"

"I took it upstairs, Dick. It looks better there. But if you like, I'll bring it back."

Nothing could have been more reasonable. Dick murmured hastily that it didn't in the least matter.

And then I remembered how Lily had told me that this cabinet had been their costliest wedding gift, and that they had used to stand together and stare at it in a daze of admiration, wondering how they were ever going to live up to it.

Presently the Aleshires had a housecleaning, and after the upheaval—which Constance described to me with unusual humour, making game of Dick's revolt—things did look surpris-

ingly new. Constance, however, declared they weren't new. They were merely "rearranged." And with this shibboleth she exorcised the spirit of rebellion.

Dick did look more unhappy over it than seemed quite manly. I take it that in this world bygones must be bygones. *Le roi est mort! Vive le roi!* Constance loved him after her fashion, and was entitled to such individual place in the sun as matrimony affords.

Yet, with all my philosophy, I myself was more than a bit put out, when I came upon Lily's portrait hanging in a secluded corner of the hall. Her beautiful eyes looked out at me with the same living expression, and followed me when I turned away.

I did not, of course, comment on the matter, but it was not long before Dick spoke of it.

"Constance thinks the hall the proper place for portraits," he remarked, not indicating Lily's, but eyeing impartially a row of dignified progenitors, hung well to the front.

"I believe that is the idea," I observed.

"You do not like it?" inquired Constance, with an air of concern.

"It has a rich, ancestral look," I replied.

Perhaps a month later, I missed Lily from the dark corner.

"In the garret! Face turned to the wall!" I said to myself. And, upon my word, my heart swelled with resentment.

Not long after, the Aleshires gave a dance, and When I went up to the dressing-room, I met a ghost in the upper hall. It was Lily. She appeared to stand at the foot of the third story stairs, for her portrait had been hung just above, a little infringing on the staircase.

I am not usually fanciful, but there are women who inspire fancies, and Lily had been one of them.

I stopped and looked at her, and it seemed to me that she returned the look with a peculiar, sweet intensity, as if she said:

"I am glad to see you, old friend. I am glad you remember me—while the rest are dancing below!"

Aleshire never alluded in my presence to the latest placing of Lily's portrait. If he spoke of it to Constance, I dare say she held that it was a fitting spot—the large and elegant upper hall of a house already overcrowded on the first floor. At all events, there it continued to hang, and I was glad it did not vanish altogether up the attic stairs.

III

By the end of the first year of the Aleshires' marriage, I was the only intimate left of the old circle. Whether Constance liked me, or felt that my banishment would be a step too far in the eliminating process—likely to stir Dick to a revolt that she couldn't quell—I never determined in my own mind; doubtless she did not dislike me, and after a time I answered to some need in her. For she was not happy, and, reticent though she was, she could not bear unhappiness in silence.

At first there was no outward sign. I recognized her dissatisfaction as an atmosphere. Then it began to take form in a word or two, sometimes only a gesture, or the brooding look of her dark eyes, behind which some unspoken grievance seemed to lurk.

She would ask at dinner, carelessly: "What have you been doing today, Dick?"

And when he attempted to answer, a curious disapproval would creep into her manner.

Again and again I have seen good-natured, imperturbable Dick first falter, and then shrivel under it.

Gradually I came to see that she didn't enjoy any recital of the day's experiences in which women figured.

And Dick came to see it, too. He would try to leave them out, but Constance had an abnormal instinct for asterisks.

One afternoon my office boy brought me a card—"Mrs. Richard Aleshire."

I had dined the Aleshires the night

before, and taken them to the Russian ballet. Constance had looked very handsome, and reasonably happy, although she had fretted a bit because Dick went over to the Benchley's box for a few minutes. When he came back, she said: "Why are you so restless, dear?"—throwing a sort of jaundiced light on the simple act—and then she seemed put out because Dick admired Pavlowa's figure.

That kind of general jealousy is like the toothache—uncomfortable, but seldom fatal. I did not look for serious results from it in the Aleshires' case, and when Constance's card was brought to me, I should have thought, if I had thought anything, that she was going to hold me up for some of her charities. The real reason certainly never entered my mind.

When I had seated her in the chair opposite mine, I saw that, whatever her object, it was not a trifling one.

Her face was very pale against her dark furs.

She did not speak, and I said:

"What can I do for you, Constance?"

Some people turn pale at the thought of making their wills. Constance might be planning hers, and feeling rather solemn over it.

As still she did not speak, but stared at me with a look of deep emotion, I added:

"Nothing wrong, I hope?"

"Yes!" she answered, and closed her lips, as if unable to say more.

It was my turn now to be silent. If this mysterious errand had anything to do with her domestic affairs, I was not minded to look into it.

"Yes!" she repeated. "There *is* something wrong!" Another pause. "Mr. Gates! I am unhappy . . . My marriage . . . Dick—"

That word gave me my opening wedge.

"Constance," I said, "if this concerns Dick—if you are going to tell me of any unhappiness with him—please don't! I am Dick's old, warm friend. Your friend, too, if you will grant it. But you can see the impropriety of my receiving from you any confidences about your husband."

She drooped, keen disappointment, almost affront, in her whole look.

Suddenly she began to whimper like a child, all the lines of her face giving way.

"I *must* confide in you! You *must* listen to me! There is no one else . . . I couldn't confide in anyone else!"

"Why not talk it over with Dick?" I said. "Have it out with him? He is a reasonable fellow."

"No—no! . . . I thought him reasonable once, but he is not so now. There is no one but you, and you *must* listen."

"My dear girl," I said—and I softened my tone as much as possible—"as Dick's oldest, closest friend, I should feel it disloyal to enter into the matter, even if he were in the wrong. But I will say this at a venture, and in all sincerity—thank God that you have one husband in a million—or, to be well within the facts, a thousand. If you knew as much of dishonesty and unfaith as I do—"

"Dishonesty! Unfaith!" she echoed, and she cast her big black muff down on my desk, and buried her face in it.

I confess I was taken aback. The worst I had imagined was incompatibility of temper.

I sat staring at her quivering shoulders, pondering how best a gentleman can eject a lady from his presence.

All at once she sat upright, dabbing her wet eyes with her handkerchief.

"You have never shown any heart, but you have at least intelligence!" she said with spirit.

It was the cleverest thing I had ever known Constance to say, but I would not yield.

"Now! now!" I said, smiling and looking at my watch. "I have an engagement at three. Let me off, Connie, from listening to any tragic stories about Dick. I wager you have disagreed about something that doesn't amount to a row of pins—phantasmagoria!"

I was rising as I spoke.

I actually intended to put Constance out of the room—leading her gently to the door, with an air of homage.

But she caught at my last word—caught at my hand, too, so that I was fairly obliged to reseat myself.

"Phantasmagoria!" she cried. "Yes, that is just it. It is so unreal—and yet so real! . . . Mr. Gates, I never thought that I would be jealous. I never dreamed that I would have occasion. But I will not bear a divided love! I will not! Dick implored me to marry him—he said I would rehabilitate his life—and now—and now—!"

I regarded so coldly her convulsed face that I hoped she would not finish the sentence. But she did. "And now all his thoughts are given to another woman!"

I was silent. I would not ask who the other woman was.

"He is never at home. He neglects me—for her. If he loved her so much why did he ask me to be his wife? I did not seek him. He sought me. And now he belittles me. In every way. In ways that I can't speak of . . . At midnight . . . looking at her picture . . . treasuring everything she says . . . I found a paper—in his pocket—signed —'Your loving'—"

She could not go on. It was impossible to banish the poor thing from my office, for she was now sobbing wildly. I was astounded at her revelations. I found it difficult to credit them.

"She may be one of these sentimental, melodramatic women who are always running after married men," I said soothingly. "And a man hates to be a brute to a woman, even a silly one. Be patient, Connie. Trust to my long experience. The best of men are fools. Ignore them, and nine times out of ten they will return to reason. Try it on Dick. He loves you—he sought you, as you say. I have the utmost confidence in your power to hold him."

"Words, words, words," as Hamlet says.

While I uttered them I was thinking with amaze of Dick's folly in carrying sentimental notes about with him. One likes to see even a Lothario exhibit common sense.

Also I was wondering whether indeed he had ever loved Constance.

However, my platitudes seemed to have the desired effect. She dried her eyes, and of her own volition took leave of me.

I walked with her to the elevator, and her last look at me through the grille was, I fancied, one of gratitude for having saved her from an unnecessary confidence.

IV

After that it was natural that I should have a keen eye out for the serpent in Paradise, yet no one appeared in their circle of acquaintance whom I could imagine in that sinister rôle. If the siren existed she could not be of the tame, domesticated variety. I took pains to observe Dick's comings and goings, remembering Constance's complaint that he was never at home.

It is true, he was not always to be found at his own fireside, but there seemed invariably an excellent reason for his absence—some club affair, a committee meeting, or a Chamber of Commerce banquet, at which he was down for a speech.

Beyond remarking that Dick subsisted entirely upon banquets, Constance was remarkably free from the old barbed pleasantries. Her more tranquil demeanor led me to think that in some fashion or other she had routed her rival.

It was when their affairs seemed to have swung back to normal that I went to spend a week with the Aleshires at their little place in the country.

It was the typical "little place"—large and expensive—an expression of Constance, not of Lily, for it had been built after the second marriage. It was plain to see that Constance took great pride in it, and here felt most truly at home, moving about, as I fancied, with a larger freedom, a deeper tranquillity.

Dick and I usually met after business hours, and motored down together. One afternoon he called for me rather early, and when I stepped into the machine, he said:

"What do you say, Jim, to going to see Mrs. Poynter?"

Now let me observe here that nothing could so clearly have marked the divergence of Dick from his usual paths of thought, and my own utter aloofness from subjects that since the beginning of time, I admit, have occupied the attention of mnay fine minds—and many not so fine—as this question of his. I did not know the woman, nor know of her, and Dick's assumption of my knowledge gave me the momentary sense of deficiency that one feels in disappointing expectations.

"And who is Mrs. Poynter?" I said.

I confess I thought at once of Constance's rival, and wondered if it could be possible that Dick was asking me to call with him upon this disquieting person.

"The great medium—greater than Paladini!" replied Dick. It cost me a mental effort to recall Paladini.

"Are you interested in that sort of thing?" I asked.

We were gliding through this thick of the traffic, and Dick was silent until he had made his way out.

"Yes," he said then, rather stiffly. "And I'll tell you why. She has brought Lily back to me. In a way that there's no gainsaying."

I was too dumbfounded to say more than "Um-m."

Dick looked a bit more nettled, but not daunted. His jaw took on the curious look by which he always expressed emotion and the will to overcome it.

"You know, Jim—I have never told you—but when Lily died she promised to come back to me, if she possibly could. There is a theory that if the body is not disturbed within three days the soul may return. While we were in Paris, after Lily began to fail, we read a good many books on those subjects. At first I did it to humour her; then I became interested myself. It gets a tremendous hold on you."

"Too much!" I murmured. Dick's eyes were fixed ahead. He seemed not to hear.

"She lived only a fortnight after we took the villa at Lugano. One night she said to the doctor—he was very fond of her—'Doctor, if one should happen to die here, could one's body remain in one's home for three days? Will the law prevent? One might have a fancy to stay here—a little.' The doctor looked at her curiously, and smiled. 'There *is* a law,' he said. 'However, it could be arranged, I think.' And he arranged it. She died that night. But she did not come back."

The motor hummed along, and I knew it was taking me nearer and nearer to Mrs. Poynter.

I didn't seem to have power to resist.

"Well," Dick continued, "after my marriage to Constance I tried not to think of these things. Then—quite by chance—I met Hasler."

Now I did know Hasler—not to know *him* would indeed be a confession of ignorance. That is, I had seen him once at a Harvard Class Day. I had never read any of his books.

"I came to know him quite well," went on Dick, "and he told me about Mrs. Poynter. He said she was, in his opinion, one of the most remarkable mediums he had ever known. That—from Hasler—is saying a great deal. Hasler, you know, has nothing to do with charlatans."

"Um-m," I commented again.

"Through her I have had some wonderful communications from Lily. She—Mrs. Poynter, you know—has a 'control.' His name is Peter. She knows nothing about him, except that he said his name was Peter. He has a sweet voice—like a young boy's. She says she believes he must have been a choir boy in Rome. He has a sort of Italian accent."

I stole a sidelong glance at Dick. He had got over his nervousness, and he looked as sane as you please.

"Well, if I could tell you all that

Lily has said to me, you would be convinced"—Dick seemed to realize that I was not exactly sitting at his feet, drinking in wisdom—"but I can't do it, Jim." His chin sank a little into his coat collar, and he frowned, staring ahead through the wind-shield—moved, I could see.

We drew up to what I took to be Mrs. Poynter's door.

I sat still and said:

"Dick, do you expect me to go in and see this woman?"

"I do," he answered. "Go for my sake, Jim. I want to know what you think of her. I want you to hear what she has to say. The call is unexpected. She can't possibly know who you are. I have never told her who I am. At all events, she won't know that I brought you, because her house is around in the next street. She can't see the car."

V

I WOULDN'T argue the case with him. The simplest way was to go.

I got heavily out of the machine—not that I'm bodily heavy, but I was heavy in spirit—disliked the whole thing—and went around the corner to Mrs. Poynter's door.

It was a commonplace door, and a commonplace woman, about thirty, admitted me. I felt sure she was not a servant, and, in fact, she proved to Mrs. Poynter's attendant.

She ushered me up to a tasteful, perfectly normal sitting-room. There was a tea-tray on a table, some trifle of fancy-work lying near—nothing stuffy or ghoulish to be seen.

The woman gave a rather long look, and went to confer with Mrs. Poynter.

Presently she returned, and said that "Madame" would see me, murmuring, as we passed into the adjoining apartment: "She is already in trance."

It appeared that the medium seldom went into this state by her own volition, but through the will of her attendant, while alone with her.

The second room was like the first—neat, sparingly furnished, no paraphernalia.

Madame lay upon her back on a couch, a thin. loose wrapper open at the throat, her arms lying along her side, her hair loosened. "She must be free," whispered the attendant. She drew a chair for me in the middle of the room, and sat down herself at the extremity of it, near the door. I observed that Madame was handsome, with a clean-cut, honest face—very pale at this moment, as if dead, except that from time to time, as one watched her, an expression of pain or perplexity flitted over it.

You could have heard a pin drop. I have no hesitancy in saying that I was nervous. The attendant looked unmoved.

"By George!" I thought. "Truly one half the world doesn't know how the other half lives!"

Here were two comfortable, normal-looking women—women who ate, sewed, did other pleasant, work-a-day things—going into trances in broad daylight—conjuring spirits from the vasty deep! It sickened me.

The profound silence continued. Even the traces of consciousness left Madame's face. She looked marble-like. One could well imagine her off in some bourne from which no traveler returns.

All at once there was a stir—upon my soul, I know no other word to describe it.

Whatever it was, I felt it before I heard anything.

Then a singularly sweet, light voice—like a girl's, yet unlike—said distinctly:

"Peter . . . Peter . . . yes, I'm Peter . . . I can't come today . . .It's hard . . . There is someone—not of our spirit world . . . he keeps me back . . ."

Madame's lips were moving.

The voice came from her.

"It is the 'control,'" whispered the attendant. "Ask him who it is that keeps him back."

I felt no inclination to converse with Peter, but I obeyed.

". . . He speaks in a large room . . . there are a great many heads . . . he is a lawyer."

Odd, wasn't it? Telepathy, of course, and yet—there was the white carnation. For I must get to that. It doesn't matter that Peter pretended to summon the ghost of my great-great-grandfather, Gerald Geoffrey Gates, who was killed by falling off a coach on Hampstead Heath in the year 1812. That was sufficiently remarkable, but I pass that over. I had taken care to say nothing that could give a clue to my identity. Suddenly Peter said:

"There is a spirit here who says she passed away in a foreign country . . . she would like to send a message to her husband . . . Her name . . . she has the name of a flower . . ."

I had been lolling with fictitious ease in my chair, and I took pains not to change my attitude, nor so much as wink an eyelash.

"Her name is Li—Lilac—Lily. Do you know a person named Lily?"

"Many!" I replied.

"This spirit died young. She says she crossed the ocean twice—once living and once dead. Her spirit wanders very close to earth. She would like to speak to her husband . . ."

The voice ceased.

"Do you know such a person?" murmured the attendant. I silenced her with a gesture.

". . . *pendant trois jours . . . Merci, mon cher docteur . . . je vous donne trop de peine!* . . ."

Peter's accent was good. I know French. And Lily had spoken it fluently.

There was another pause.

Then—

"It is difficult . . . there is a thick cloud . . . it is an earth mind . . . he keeps me back . . ."

Again a pause.

Mrs. Poynter, over whose face a change was passing, moved her lips several times silently, before there came in the clear, sweet voice of Peter:

"Take one of the white carnations, and give to your friend, who waits. He will understand."

After that she did not speak. The look of pain and perplexity was returning.

"She is coming out," said the attendant, rising.

I, too, rose.

With one accord we looked at the mantel, on which stood a vase filled with white carnations. I took one, and went down the stairs, out into the sunlight, feeling like a bat coming out of a cave. Dick gave me a searching look. I handed him the flower.

"I was to give you this. Peter said: 'Give this to your friend, who waits. He will understand.'" I was careful to say no more. "*Do* you understand?" I asked.

Dick turned as pale as a sheet.

He put the flower quickly into his breast pocket, started the car, and drove some distance before replying.

"Yes," he said then. "It was Lily's favorite flower. I always brought them to her . . . and her grave was covered with them . . ."

VI

As we drove homeward, I told him everything. I said that, of course, I was no Hasler, and couldn't pretend to say what it all meant; that it was highly interesting and all that, but I advised him to devote himself to Constance, and think no more of spirits.

He acknowledged there was little profit in it, and yet—couldn't I imagine what it meant to him to have Lily come back—to hear her voice again—to receive this token from her?

It was pathetic. I said I could imagine it perfectly, but that I thought his duty to Constance should forbid his wandering from this world into the next—even the least jealous wife could hardly enjoy it. But perhaps Constance did not know?

Yes, he confessed, she did know. In-

deed, she had once gone with him to a slate-writer, both of them having become interested in the subject through Hasler. But when there appeared upon the slate a message from Lily, Constance had become greatly agitated. Afterward she had found in his pocket a slip of paper, upon which Mrs. Poynter had written a few words from Lily, and there had been a scene.

"So don't tell her about this séance today," he concluded. "I wanted to know what a hard head like yours would make of it. But you are right, Jim. I must give it up."

The rival! Now was explained the remarkable invisibility of the disturbing influence in Constance's happiness. Lily!—sweet vanished spirit, who in life would not have hurt a fly—made by some blasphemous juggling with the Unknown to torture the lives she would have blessed! No one who knew her could credit her with a selfish thought. If indeed we live hereafter, and Lily were Lily, as she was on earth—and if indeed some essence of her could escape, and revisit the scenes she knew here—I could picture her only as a gentle shade, wise beyond the wisdom of humanity, worlds beyond this world's littlenesses, looking down upon everybody, even upon the woman who had taken her place, with an infinite pity and understanding.

VII

I saw a great deal of the Aleshires after they came back to town, and I fancied Dick must have given up his excursions into No-man's Land, for Constance seemed happier than I had ever seen her. Then came the night when for the last time I was a guest in the home that had been Lily's.

A believer in the supernatural—strange bonds between the seen and unseen—might well have sensed something unusual in the very atmosphere. All day there had been a moaning, whiffling wind, which stiffened to a gale as night fell.

After dinner at the club, I rang up the Aleshires, and asked if they would be at home. Constance's voice replied:

"Yes, we shall be delighted. Dick hasn't come yet, but I expect him every minute. No, don't put it off . . . You will amuse me."

We both laughed at that, mutually aware of some absurdity in the idea. I found her sitting by the fire in a loose, Greekish sort of dress, looking downright beautiful—I would never have admitted it before—but with the glint in her eye that told of a world a-gley.

"I have just had a Long Distance from Boston," she said. "Dick is detained until tomorrow."

She assumed that, as usual, I knew of his movements. There were a dozen reasons why he should not have told me of this journey, yet it struck me as odd that he had not. Somehow my mind leaped to Hasler. There had lately been a great deal in the papers about his having discovered a new psychic fifty times more wonderful than Mrs. Poynter. Hasler and the new medium both lived in Boston. And though I knew much of Dick's affairs, I had never known of his having any business connections there.

Constance seemed quite unable to conceal her disquietude. Possibly if she had had more time to digest Dick's message she might have put a better face upon it.

Again and again she rose from her chair, on some pretext or other, and moved about the room. She did not stick to any subject. She bit her lip. She twisted her rings.

She was so manifestly ill at ease that I thought, in kindness to her, I would take my leave as early as possible. She demurred politely, but I had risen, and we were standing together in the hall when, with a startled air, she asked:

"Do you smell smoke?"

I was aware of it instantly. We looked upward to the staircase, and saw that everything was dim with it. At the same moment a misty figure

came running down, and Bates, the butler, called out:

"Mrs. Aleshire, there is fire in the wall of your room!"

There seems to be a terror about fire that nothing else can equal. Such fear flashed into Constance's face that I thought to see her faint on the spot. But she pulled herself together. Bates had already rung up the fire department from the desk telephone in her room, and—so rapid was the spread of the flames—this was the last time anyone could enter it. By the time the engines got there the whole house was doomed.

I was bringing down a maid, overpowered by smoke on the attic floor, when I met a fireman rushing up, and shouted to him:

"Save that picture there! Don't try to carry it! Cut it out of the frame!"

It was Lily's portrait. And it was strange to see how serene she looked in the midst of that inferno.

When the flames had done their worst, and nothing remained of Dick's beautiful house but the blackened lower story, open to all the winds of heaven, I chanced upon the fireman whom I had met on the stairs.

"What did you do with that picture?" I asked—for I was anxious to put it out of harm's way.

"I couldn't save it," he said. "I'd got it half cut out, when Mrs. Aleshire called to me that she'd rather I took the one next to it. I'd barely time to run down stairs when the roof fell in."

VIII

I STAYED until I had done my duty by Constance. She was sobbing wildly, and shaking like an aspen. I called a taxi for her, and as I was leading her to it she suddenly sagged against my arm, crying out hysterically:

"I shall never be forgiven! . . . Oh, if I could only die!"

But though she was very ill for a time, Constance did not die. Dick came home next morning, and they went at once to Marshlands. There, some eight months later, their boy was born. They named him after me, and he's a fine lad. Dick talked of building another house on the old site, but somehow it was never done, and the lots were sold. Constance said Marshlands was the proper place in which to bring up a child.

The Aleshires seem very happy. Little Jim is six years old now. Not long ago Dick and I were smoking a friendly pipe together in his den, when the boy, who had been poking about his father's desk, found a queer little object in an envelope, and, holding it up, cried out:

"Daddy, what is this? Is it a dead butterfly?"

Dick took it out of his hand rather abruptly.

"No, son," he answered. "It's a pressed flower."

And with a sudden tightening of his jaw, he put it back in the drawer, and turned the key upon it.

THERE are no careful marriages. There may be brilliant and romantic marriages—but never careful marriages. No careful persons ever really go that far.

THE ultimate insult: kissing a girl with her permission.

L'AMOUR VAINQUEUR

By Han Ryner

DEPUIS dix ans, Pierre Vaumeil passait pour fou. Jadis il fut un savant, mais la mort d'une femme adorée avait, à ce qu'affirmait toute la petite ville, annihilé son esprit.

Souvent il se promenait dans la campagne. Par instants, il prononçait à haute voix quelques paroles.

On lui disait:

— Vous parlez seul, monsieur Vaumeil?

Il répliquait:

—Je ne suis jamais seul.

Et parfois il racontait une histoire, peut-être symbolique, à laquelle ses interlocuteurs ne comprenaient rien.

Aussi sa réputation de foile était solidement établie.

L'autre jour, il allait selon sa coutume.

Une dizaine de curieux le suivaient ou l'entouraient. Il ne semblait pas s'apercevoir de leur présence.

Il y avait, sur son visage, une lumière d'extase.

Soudain, il arrêta sa marche. Et il dit, les regards lointains:

— Toutes les pensées qui me visitent et toutes les joies auxquelles j'ouvre mon cœur portent encore le nom et le visage de la bien-aimée.

Il s'assit au rebord d'un fossé et s'écria:

— O bien-aimée, disparue depuis si longtemps aux yeux naïfs qui ne voient que le dehors. . . .

Puis il s'interrogea bizarrement

— Sais-tu, Pierre, si Pierre est autre chose que la forme visible du souvenir d'Alice? . . .

Et il se tut, préoccupé par ce problème.

Quelqu'un lui dit:

— Vous avez l'air heureux, monsieur Vaumeil?

— J'aime, répondit-il, et je suis aimé.

Et, comme il lui arrivait, il se mit à conter, avec une poésie inquiétante:

* * *

— On dit communément que Circé changeait les hommes en bêtes. C'est inexact. Elle dépouillait les bêtes de la forme humaine, elle écar tait les mensonges. Elle donnait à l'esprit stupide ou au cœur bas la forme matérielle qui constitue un aveu.

Un jour, la tempête jeta dans l'île de la magicienne des êtres nombreux qui semblaient des hommes. Elle leur présenta le breuvage qui force la figure à devenir, sincère, un museau ou un groin. Et elle augmenta ses troupeaux d'ânes et de porcs.

Pourtant un homme et une femme restaient inchangés. Ils allaient, se tenant par la main, rapprochant fréquemment leurs lèvres qui semblaient ensuite ne pouvoir se déprendre. Ils mordaient aux mêmes fruits et buvaient aux mêmes fontaines.

Circé leur présenta le plus énergique de ses philtres, un philtre si puissant qu'il eût forcé à l'aveu les dieux eux-mêmes, métamorphosant Apollon en paon, Mercure en renard ou Mars en tigre.

Eux prirent, sans savoir, la boisson offerte et à la coupe large ils burent ensemble. Teus deux becs de colombes plongent, après la pluie, au même creux du rocher.

Quant la coupe fut vide, ils la laissèrent tomber négligemment sur le gazon et ils s'éloignèrent.

Ils ne s'éloignèrent pas sous des formes rabaissées d'animaux. Ils mar-

chaient toujours droits et sveltes, le regard dans le regard. Ils s'arrêtaient parfois, lèvre collée à la lèvre. Ils marchaient et s'arrêtaient, toujours homme, toujours femme.

Circé, furieuse et sournoise, les suivait. Elle se demandait:

— Quoi donc a pu détruire le force redoutable du philtre?

Les deux amis ne savaient point que quelqu'un était derrière eux et ils ignoraient la question dont la magicienne se déchirait avec rage. Mais Circé pleura bientôt son impuissance irrémédiable. Car un léger trouble intérieur avait fait parler les amants.

Or, le bien-aimé avait dit à la bien-aimée:

— J'ai une raison d'être homme, ô vie de ma vie, puisque tu es femme.

La bien-aimée avait dit au bien-aimé:

— Puisque tu es homme, ô cœur de mon cœur, il faut bien que je sois femme.

* * *

Un long silence marqua la fin du récit. Une gêne pesait sur les auditeurs qui ne comprenaient peut-être qu'à moitié, mais qui, la plupart, sentaient quelque chose de grand et de noble se dresser au milieu d'eux.

Pierre Vaumeil eut, tout à coup, un grand rire, comme dans un triomphe. Et il affirma:

— La mort n'est pas plus puissante que Circé.

Alors le plus stupide de ceux qui étaient là eut un regard de malice, toucha son front du bout du doigt.

Et il prononça, avec une pitié dédaigneuse:

— Le pauvre homme! . . . Il est comme ça depuis la mort de sa femme . . . depuis qu'il vit seul.

Pierre entendit les dernières paroles. Ses yeux brillèrent comme ces feux que les anciens allumaient sur les sommets pour annoncer la victoire.

— Etes-vous bien sûr, demanda-t-il, qu'on soit seul quand on aime ou qu'on soit mort quand on est aimé? . . .

Personne ne répondit. Et, comme il se levait pour continuer sa route, personne n'osa le suivre.

MARRONNIERS

By René-Mary Clerfeyt

L'ON voit, parmi l'épaisseur du fueillage,
Les grappes blanches,
Comme une vision d'ailes d'anges
Dans les nuages.

Un gai rayon de soleil tremblotant
Y danse et joue
Comme une larme sur la joue
D'un enfant.

Les fleurs, quand un zéphyr pousse la branche,
Par envolées
S'en vont, odorantes tombées
De neige blanche.

BROADWAY

By George Jean Nathan

THE common gymnastic which has for its major gesture the blaming of Broadway, and what Broadway represents, for all that is worst in the American drama is grounded on a fallacy not less fantastic than the current war philosophy which holds that while it is Christian to poke an enemy through the bowels with a bayonet, it is somewhat anti-Christian to kill him painlessly with poisoned gas. The bane of the American drama is not Broadway, but Fifth Avenue. Broadway, and the essence of Broadway, its spirit and esthetic, have given to America what of peculiar individuality and freshness its native drama possesses, where Fifth Avenue—or at least the oblique influence of Fifth Avenue—has more often scuttled the ship.

The majority of our popular playwriters are, by nativity and upbringing, products of Broadway. This one, when at an age when other little boys were being roundly spanked for so much as venturing to ask their parents just what it was Hannah Elias was doing to make her famous, was already embellishing the vaudeville stage and swatting his father on the nose with a newspaper upon an exchange of *double entente* on the Princess Chimay. And that one, while at the age when most babies are still having their little Keystones tenderly sprinkled with talcum, was already being projected violently upon his from up out a trapdoor in one of David Henderson's extravaganzas.

Of such, in considerable part, our American play-composers: grown-up stage children, ex-ushers, ex-callboys, ex-actors, ex-advance agents. And where not precisely of this gender, alumni—we find in *Who's Who*—of such pertinent literary and artistic callings as freight-train conductor, hotel clerk, carpenter, stock-broker, circus acrobat, shop-keeper and shoe salesman. Of training in the arts, of training in the graces of gentility and good breeding, of the cultural poise and outlook that come from careful preparation and careful education and association with the finished and adventured peoples of the world, from first to last scarcely a trace, scarcely a clue. Rather a sure swagger, a knock-'em-out-of-their-seats sort of artistry, a brash but not unfacile command of the elementary hokums of the theater, a loud and brazen, yet clever, trading in the biff-bang melodramatics and slam-bang farce stuffs—but no reserve, no deliberation, no whimsey nor fancy nor beauty.

These makers of plays are of Broadway even before first they come to Broadway. What Broadway is and what Broadway stands for, they too are and they too stand for. The spirit of their early training has been not the quiet spirit of appropriate foods and appropriate guidance, appropriate books and schools and companions, but the spirit of street slang, of pert insolence, of opinionated bravado, of dollar divinity. And this latter training they have brought to Broadway, to the Broadway that glorifies it and venerates it, to the Broadway that is itself the crystallization of all the crude native superficialities in the arts—the Broadway that knows Schumann only as the inspiration of one of Planquette's duets in "The Chimes of Nor-

mandy," Titian as the colour of Billie Burke's hair, and Gourmont as a possible typographical error for the word signifying an omnivorous feeder. But—

And here we engage the important point—

Broadway is honest. It may be, in the way some of us estimate the things of this world, uncouth and shoddy and common, but it is without snobbishness, without spurious delicacy, without *simagrée* and false shame. Its spirit is cheap, loud, but it doesn't pretend it otherwise. And its people, though an absurd people, are withal a guileless one: the species that smokes cigars on the street, wears the watch-chain suspended from the lapel of the coat and regards Bernard Shaw and H. G. Wells as radicals—the species pistillate that would grandly demonstrate its familiarity with the French tongue by losing no opportunity to indulge itself in the droll luxury of pronouncing the name as Sarra Bairnhardt, and that would emphasize its *bienséance* and unimpeachable status of lady by a *dégagé* pursing of its lips and elevating of its eyebrows as it sinks with a great display of nonchalance into a first-night orchestra chair. Yet these, intrinsically, are harmless histrionics, like those of so many little girls playing "society" in their mother's discarded ball gowns, and they fool nobody and but make the more emphatic the artlessness and *naïveté* that lie underneath the gaudy pink and purple satins and amazing décolletes and other such manifestations of the art of the Forty-fifth Street West Callot Sœurs and the other side-street Lanvins, Chéruits and Poirets. For, fundamentally, Broadway and its people, for all their untoward externals and protevangeliums, are children gullibly agape at a great Christmas tree, dancing and shouting gleefully over the tinsel stars and salt-sprinkled cotton snow and cornucopias filled with lemon-drops. To them these things are as real: the tinsel stars destined to illumine the night of the world and the cornucopias crammed with sweet and candied apricots. . . . Broadway—a continuous performance of "Peter Pan" by an exceptionally bad provincial stock company.

Out of this childish quality, and doubtless because of it, there has come to the American stage what is the typical American drama, a drama which, though lacking all finish, all elegance, all worldly philosophy and penetration and distinction, is yet, and probably by virtue of these very defects, racy of the nation and emblematic of its attitude, its specious love of externals, its graceless hurry, gawky youth, untutored bluster and cocky confidence. In this drama, the product of Broadway, there is neither the quality of reminiscence, for reminiscence is the privilege and estate of the mind's gentlemen, nor the quality of lives and loves greatly lived. Nor the quality of a heartache induced by something other than a declining stock market or the stage faithlessness of Florence Reed. Nor the quality of heartsease imparted otherwise than through the spectacle of a fat little ingénue succumbing ultimately to the embrace of Mr. William Courtenay or an alcoholic pickpocket yielding at length to the potent amending alchemy of peach jam and a canvas backdrop painted to represent a bucolic landscape.

But to such insight, but to such understanding and appreciation of and deep sympathy with the living things of this life, the Broadway playmaker, say what you will against him, makes no claim. He gives himself over, instead, to the things he does understand, and among these things the first is the way in which to amuse and entertain the countless Americans like himself who regard the theater, and probably not without peculiar reason, as a refuge from art and literature, from beauty and truth. Who regard the theater as an institution wherein the mirror that might be held to nature were vastly more entertainingly employed as an implement wherewith drolly to paddle the comique upon the antipodes, and wherein life is contemplated chiefly as an attempt to outwit

the vindictive machinations of the New York police force. And the entertainments the Broadway playmaker thus provides his orchestra effigies and constituents are America's distinctive contributions to the dramatic records of the world, as distinctively American, if at once as distinctively unstimulating, inelegant and esthetically haggard, as ice-cream soda, professional baseball, Billy Watson's Beef Trust and red-white-and-blue handkerchiefs. Making up in surface cleverness, novelty and breezy gait what they lack in the moods and manners of the finer dramaturgy, they excel, theatrically, by very reason of their deficiencies. For where it is a matter of loud farce or loud melodrama or trick comedy, the Broadway playmaker has proved in the last half dozen years that he knows more about his trade, and is a vastly more adroit craftsman, than his British or Continental competitor. He is more ingenious, more sagacious in the employment of his crude materials and still cruder philosophies, and the plays he builds are accordingly not only more ingenious plays than his rivals build abroad, but at the same time as indelibly and symbolically fragrant of the American attitude toward, and conception of, life and art and morals as *The Saturday Evening Post*.

The Broadway play, in short, is the representative American drama, and it is so regarded by the critics and publics of London and the capitals of continental Europe. The typical American play is not a play of the quality of "The Poor Little Rich Girl" nor "Old Lady 31" nor "The Truth" nor "The New York Idea" (however much we might wish it were), but a play like "Kick In" or "Within the Law" or "It Pays to Advertise" or "Turn to the Right." They are not to be mistaken. For where "The Poor Little Rich Girl" might conceivably have been written by Barrie, where "Old Lady 31" might have been written by Ludwig Fulda and "The Truth" by Alfred Capus and "The New York Idea" by Caillavet and de Flers or G. K. Chesterton, it is pretty difficult to think of anyone having written "Kick In" or "Within the Law" or "It Pays to Advertise" or "Turn to the Right" save an American. "The Faun," presented anonymously, might well have been attributed to a Continental like Molnar, but "Cheating Cheaters" would puzzle no one. Such plays are as undeniably and unmistakably American as "The Habit of a Lackey" is undeniably and unmistakably French or as "Maria Rosa" is Spanish or as "Riders to the Sea" is Irish or as "The Flag Lieutenant" is British or as "Anatol" is Viennese or "The Sea Gull" Russian.

Foreigners, the British frequently, the French occasionally and the Germans somewhat less occasionally, have attempted to imitate the Broadway-American play and to poor, if not, indeed, ridiculous, result. Such German imitations of the Broadway crook farce as Turzinsky and Stifter's "One Shouldn't Write Letters" have been as unhappy as such French imitations of Broadway melodrama as Bisson and Livet's "Nick Carter" or as such British imitations of the Broadway chaskleinismus as A. E. W. Mason's "For the Defence." Broadway is as exotically American as watermelon and the men's suits they make in Rochester, and its peculiar and individual dramaturgy cannot be duplicated by the foreigner any more than can the Bronx cocktail. The humour of Cartoonist Goldberg, the music of Irving Berlin, the drugstores of the Riker-Hegeman Company, the acting of Frank Craven, the House of Representatives, the Pittsburgh stogie, Beeman's Pepsin Chewing Gum, the mechanical barber-chair and the drama of George Cohan are each and all autoptically and incontrovertibly American, and the foreigner, if he would take them, must take them in their entirety, just as they stand, bone, fat and all, or leave them. They resist change, adaptation, tinkering. They are as saliently American, however greatly the foreigner may try to disguise them, as the drama of François

de Curel and women's bangs slicked down with white of egg are French or as Wagner's operas and dill pickles are German.

Broadway, strident, half-cooked, credulous, unlearned and egregious, is the epitome of mob America and of mob America's view of art and letters. And its plays, not the plays of such as Avery Hopwood or Langdon Mitchell or Eleanor Gates or young Eugene O'Neill, are the plays that are most representatively American. That these plays are not always plays to the palate of the tenth American, that this one man out of every ten of his compatriots prefers probably the finer American efforts of such other writers for the national theater as the Zoe Akins of "Papa" or the Edward Sheldon of at least "The Song of Songs" or the late Charlie MacLellan of "The Shirkers," does not alter the fact that they are, nevertheless and pertinently, the one genuine, blown-in-the-bottle contribution of the United States to the world's museum of show-shop literature and that they are in their way, and in their design and content, as valuable, significant and fruity to the international student of national characteristics as the flat-houses of Charlottenburg or a dinner with a French family in their home or a flirtation with a Chinese sing-song girl.

That these plays of Broadway are not more elegant specimens of dramatic literature may be, quite true, a matter for esthetic regret, but this is not the point. At least not in this present chapter. The Ziegfeld "Follies" is the highest form of music show of its particular genre that the world knows today; it hits squarely the mark it aims at; and there's nothing to be gained lamenting the circumstance that, after all, it isn't an opera. The plays of George Cohan, by the same token, are the shrewdest specimens of their particular school that you will find anywhere along the coasts of the seven seas, and it is equally vain, and even sillier, to grumble that they have not been written by John Galsworthy. The trade of Broadway is the trade of turning out the Broadway-American play. And it knows its job superlatively well; and if that job is the jejune and humble one we know it to be, the knowledge must not obscure the fact that the Broadway playwriting type of American is still as considerable a virtuoso in his line as the Chicago beef-king type of American is in his or the Schenectady electro-mechanical type of American in his.

When the American of Broadway is a frank, natural and undissembling man, when he admits himself to be merely a good-natured dudeler and lays no pretence to the purple robes, when he confesses engagingly that he doesn't know a thing about the ologies and therapys and isms, nor about Mozart and Huysmans and Manet, nor about Sercial Madeira and butlers and fingerbowls, when, in short, he strikes no spurious posture and seeks not to be a higher fellow than in actuality he is, he serves the American drama honourably and, for all his shortcomings, interestingly. For it is this playmaker who at intervals prosperously carries forward still another step the thoroughly American drama of such as Hoyt and Ade, who brings that drama a trifle closer to the national pulse, a trifle nearer to the national philosophy, a trifle more snugly, perhaps, within the bounds of a more finished technic. In this category we find such Broadway plays as Craven's "Too Many Cooks," as Smith's "Fortune Hunter," as Cohan's "Wallingford" and Megrue's "It Pays to Advertise." Of such is the real and more searching drama of the United States, of thrice the native authenticity of a dozen "Witching Hours," a dozen "Peter Grimms," a dozen "Cases of Becky" and "As a Man Thinks" and "Models" and "Bumpstead-Leighs" and other such pseudo-philosophical, pseudo-psychological, pseudo-metaphysical and pseudo-drawing-room pseudo *opera.*

These latter berceuses, and numerous others like them, though all too com-

monly held up by the professors as high-water marks of the American dramaturgy, are in reality American plays only in so far as they have been written by Americans. But further than this they are no more genuinely American than Milwaukee. They are, for the most part, mere half-digested and shoddy apings and cuckooings of European plays, mere strivings of intellectual climbers to break into the select circle, mere antics of the bourgeoisie in Sunday clothes. When I say that it is the influence of Fifth Avenue, rather than the influence of Broadway, that has brought the real ill to the American drama, this is what I mean. I mean Fifth Avenue in the abstract, the Fifth Avenue complex in the physical and psychical composition of Sixth: the intellectual pusher, the toothpick user in the top hat, the Roget *littérateur*, the Phoenix Ingraham of the Broadway *beau monde*, the halb-schopenhauer of the Rialto's lettered élite, the Mezzofanti of Jack's. It is this influence and the playwriters it has bred that have brought to the native drama those qualities of fake and snobbery, of charlatanism and ankle-deep profundity, that have made the American drama a thing for mock and nose-fingering, a target for slapsticks and tin broadswords. It is this influence that causes the so-called dean of American dramatists to write, in the phrase of the late Charles Frohman, the way a negro talks, that causes the so-called wizard of American stage lore to t a c k l e psychotherapeutical d r a m a when his talent is really for the good, plain, old-fashioned melodramatical kind in which somebody beats Jack Dalton to the railroad trestle, that causes this and that writer for our theater periodically to compose a society play in which the butler passes back and forth through the drawing-room on his way to answer the doorbell.

And it is this influence that, by so bringing these otherwise skilful writers for the stage to write of things foreign to them, at once takes them from that very field wherein they might do praiseworthy work and wherein they might labour to the greater good and greater estate of the native drama. For these misled writers are intrinsically clever fellows, some of them vastly more so than some of their Broadway confrères whose plays are numbered in the representative stage literature of our country; and that they might further enrich and further develop this Broadway-American drama were they not so self-seduced is only too plain, and only too regrettable. . . . That the rooster a peacock would be, that chanticleer would seek to control the source of all light, that the modern Davids do put too much faith in the Goliath fable!

To oppose the contention that these writers who essay to break away from Broadway are to be commended in that, coincidentally, they are making an effort to inject a something finer, a something more exalted and finished, into the Broadway-American drama, is to argue (1) that the leopard can change his spots and (2) that, having changed them, he may be used conveniently as a checker-board. The one thing above all others that the Broadway-American drama does *not* need is finish. Its very crudity is the thing that makes it what it is. It is this crudity, this lack of polished writing and artistic exaltation, that best serves it and permits it sharply to reflect its subject matter and its characters. The Broadway-American drama and crudity are generically—esthetically, if you will—as inseparable as are crudity and the American burlesque show, crudity and Hindu music, crudity and the heavyweight prize fight or crudity and East Indian dancing. Take one from the other and you have nothing left. To refine the Broadway-American drama is to emasculate it, to take the racy Americanism out of it and to fit it to an inappropriate standard and formula. To refine the Broadway-American drama and to eliminate from it its crudity is to supplant the bladder in the burlesque show with a copy of *The Atlantic Monthly*, to add a bass

viol and French horn to the Hindu orchestra, to make the prize-fighters perform like so many Bunthornes and to persuade the East Indian ladies to don diapers.

But, even were the refinement of this drama a desideratum, the playwrights who have deserted the field for the more tony dramatic regions of polysyllables and metempsychosis and Pitts the butler, would in all probability be scarcely the souls for the job. What they would bring to the Broadway-American play would be not so much refinement in its genuine and tonic sense as refinement of the whimsical genre that they presently exhibit to us in their wares: that is, refinement translated in terms of a French maid, a mauve piano and some orange and magenta Elsie De Wolf sofa pillows. What they would bring to the Broadway-American play, further, would be the florid altiloquence which they mistake for fine writing and which presently contrives to make all their characters talk like a curtain speech by an English actor.

On the other hand, were these Rialto exquisites to get back, so to speak, to the soil, were they to resist this impulse to strut and crow, were they to be again the men they truly are—not scholars nor men of letters nor bloods of the world of fashion, but dexterous fellows at stage writing withal—the Broadway-American play might benefit by their skill and experience, by the qualities they indubitably possess but which currently are buried deep under the layers of flourish and affectation. The Broadway-American drama is not always the *stupidaggine* and the despicable art form they and we are led by the macaronis of the forum to believe. It has its place, and a definite one, in American art and letters, just as have the excellent cartoons of Webster and McCutcheon and Briggs, the peculiarly indigenous and strikingly characteristic writings of E. W. Howe, and the humour of Ring Lardner and Helen Green Van Campen. There is no more reason for the typical American writer of typical American plays to attempt to bring so-called politeness and literary atmosphere to Broadway than there is for the typical American writer of typical American songs to bring Verlaine and Swinburne to tin-pan alley. It is a double imitating to essay to make of the American drama a society drama, for American society is already a mere mimicking of English society. The typical American drama must be—and is—the drama of the typical American people. And the archtype of this people, already automatically and naturally exaggerated for the exaggeration vital to stage depictment, is the American people of Broadway.

II

THE new season is upon us. The most interesting play, and by long odds, presented to the moment of writing is a neat-handed adaptation of Henning Berger's "The Deluge," the production of which has been accomplished by Mr. Arthur Hopkins with all the felicity and skill one has come to expect from that young gentleman. Imagine Jerome K. Jerome, Karl Ettlinger, and, possibly, George Cohan collaborating in one of their genial moments, and imagine then the play taken under wing by Max Maurey and made peculiarly ready for the Guignol, and you have a pretty fair notion of the exhibit's quality. Relating the reactions of various human beings to imminent catastrophe and to the subsequent evanescence of danger, the play is tensely and sharply conceived, is garnished with a highly delectable humour and is, from first to last, at once still another mark of credit to the Hopkins managerial record and a bracer to be recommended to theatergoers who have gone through attacks of such things as Edward Peple's "Friend Martha," May Tully's "Mary's Ankle," Victor Mapes' "The Lassoo," Jane Cowl and Jane Murfin's "Daybreak," A. Schomer's "The Inner Man" and similar early season outgivings.

The Peple play is the pre-Sydney

Grundy *conte* of the young woman whose tyrannical and grunting pater is set on her marriage to an imposing ancient, with the *fille* having eyes only for the handsome young Lieutenant Jack Kildare—the scenery on this occasion being done over to represent a Quaker settlement in the 1830's. The Tully composition is a laborious effort to extract the chuckle juices from farce situations of the vintage of "Charley's Aunt"—the impecunious young man whose rich uncle desires him to wed, the unexpected arrival of the opulent connexion, the passing off of the casual mademoiselle as the wife, the curtain dropping on the contingency of the couple being forced to occupy the same boudoir, etc. One after the other the venerable didoes hobble out upon their alpenstocks and crutches and permit themselves to be engaged by actors who express excitement and emotional travail by gulping, and by a playwriting vocabulary which relies for its picturesque humours upon such modish adjectives as "cheesy."

"The Lassoo" is described upon the playbill as a "society comedy" and includes therefore among its *dramatis personæ* such pertinent constituents of the fashionable Long Island set as a moving picture manager, a slangy Broadway actress, a Broadway actor, a hack writer, a young society man who is overwhelmed when the maid serves cocktails and a *recherché* terpsichorean artist who encircles his partner's waist with his little finger poised exquisitely aloft, as if he were about to negotiate a demi-tasse. The play itself is an outdated phoenix of such pieces as Porter Browne's "The Spendthrift," without wit or humour, without anything save the most horizontal approach in the matter of viewpoint and writing. The actress assigned to the leading rôle, a Miss Phoebe Foster, plays all her scenes in the conventional posture: left hand upon her hip and right hand, palm open, pressed wistfully against her cheek.

"The Inner Man" is still another melancholious enterprise concerned with the reformation of the criminal. "Business Before Pleasure" is the latest of the Potash and Perlmutter plays and, the joint work of the Messrs. Glass and Goodman, proves to be extremely amusing vaudeville. The two potential candidates for commissions in the Quartermaster's Department are on this occasion beheld in the moving picture business. Mr. William Le Baron's farce, "The Very Idea," though crudely composed, vouchsafes, in its last two acts, a number of good horse laughs and enjoys besides the advantage of the farcical talents of Mr. Ernest Truex. The piece is billed as a comedy, but many of our farces are in advance discreetly so denominated by producers who are somewhat doubtful whether the pieces are as funny as they ought to be and who desire to take no chances.

"Daybreak," like "The Lassoo," enchants the Broadway clients with the Broadway conception of life as it is lived among the socially elect: a cinema of promiscuous copulation, bad epigram and nonchalant allusion to Newport, the Ritz, the Rolls-Royce motor car and the desirability of squeezing a soupçon of plum into the cocktail *vice* the customary orange. An additional flavour of smartness is imparted the picture by the duplex employment of the breakfast room as a reception room and business office, and by actors who affect white flannel outing trousers in the city scenes (and in October). The play, at bottom, is the orthodox melodrama in which a man revolvers another man for having deflowered his wife and in which, as the final curtain falls, the faithful admirer is observed tenderly kissing the hand of the deceased's widow and breathing that he will always be—there—waiting—until she calls him.

WOMAN, LOVELY WOMAN!

By H. L. Mencken

§ 1

IN the midst of the war, the eternal woman question, that worse and damnder curse, continues to roost upon the subconsciousness of the race like the Sumerian basilisk upon the chest of U-sar-néph-ritus, the jitney Merodach. Scarcely a week goes by that I do not receive a book or two dealing with it—books chiefly wrote by suffragettes haunted by the vain wish that they were men, and thus able to vote for the barrel-house candidate, and to smoke five-cent cigars, and to duck through the swinging doors on hot days, and to read the *Police Gazette* in the barbershop, and to sit in the club-car, and to belong to the Elks and Freemasons, and to make a mock of the simple trust of poor working girls. Particularly this last. Once before I called dismayed attention to the fleshly flavor of suffragette literature, and I now do so again, more in horror than in dudgeon. The inflammatory compositions of Christabel Pankhurst, LL.B., and other such specialists in the not-to-be-mentioned-by-ladies have convinced a number of the girls, it would seem, that the average male adult of Christendom leads a life of gaudy carnality, rolling magnificently from one liaison to another, and with an almost endless queue of ruined stenographers, telephone operators, manicurists, milliners, chorus girls, charwomen, parlor maids and waitresses behind him, all dying of poison and despair. The life of man, as these alarmed (and envious) ones see it, is the life of a leading actor in a boulevard *revue*. He is polygamous, multigamous, myriadigamous, an insatiable and inconscionable debauchee, a monster of promiscuity; prodigiously unfaithful to his wife, and even to his friends' wives; fathomlessly sinful and superbly happy.

Needless to say, this picture belongs to fable. If the suffragette scaremongers (I speak without any embarrassing naming of names) were attractive enough to men to get near enough to enough men to know enough about them for their purpose, they would paralyze the women's clubs and boarding schools with no such flattering libels. The simple truth is that the average man of our time and nation is vastly more virtuous, in the narrow American sense, than the authors of these alarming books and pamphlets ever dream. I do not say, of course, that he is pure in heart, for the chances are that he isn't; what I do say is that, in the overwhelming majority of cases, he is pure in act, even in the face of temptation. And why? For several main reasons, not to go into minor ones. One of them is that it takes a certain enterprise and courage to engage and betray the innocent affection of a sharp-eyed and highly-instructed working girl —and this is the sort of enterprise and courage that he hasn't got. Another is that he lacks the money: it takes more funds than he can withdraw from his wife's notice to ensnare even the most willing of bearable victims. Finally, and above all, he has a conscience, and that conscience stands immovably between his confidential aspirations and their lamentable fulfilment.

What! A conscience? Yes, dear friends, a conscience. It may be a poor one, a snide one, an artificial one. It

may be indistinguishable, at times, from the mere fear that someone may be looking. It may be shot through with hypocrisy, stupidity, play-acting. But nevertheless, as consciences go in Christendom, it is genuinely entitled to the name—and it is always in action. A man, remember, is not a being *in vacuo;* he is the fruit and slave of the environment that bathes him; as Haeckel puts it, the cell does not act, it *re*acts. One cannot go to Congress or to the penitentiary without becoming, in some measure, a rascal. One cannot fall overboard without shipping water. One cannot pass through Harvard without carrying away scars. And by the same token one cannot live and have one's being in a great moral republic, year in and year out, without falling, to some extent at least, under that moral obsession which is the national hall-mark. An American, his nose buried in Nietzsche, the *New Republic*, "Man and Superman" and other such advanced literature, may caress himself with the notion that he is an immoralist—that he has emancipated himself from the International Sunday-school Lessons. But all the while there is a part of him that remains a sound Puritan, a moralist, a Presbyterian, just as there are parts of him that remain a baseball fan, a lodge-joiner, a democrat. And that part, in times of stress, asserts itself. It may not worry him on ordinary occasions. It may not stop him when he swears, or takes a nip of corn, or goes fishing on Sunday; it may even let him alone when he goes to a leg-show. But the moment a concrete Temptress rises before him, her nose snow-white, her lips rouged, her eyelashes dropping provokingly—the moment such a creature has at him, and his lack of ready funds begins to conspire with his lack of courage to assault and wobble him—at that precise moment his conscience flares into function, and so finishes his business. First he sees difficulty, then he sees danger, then he sees wrong. The result? The result is that he takes to the woods, and another vampire is baffled of her prey.

In all this, of course, there is nothing new. Dr. Hatteras lately set forth the facts in this very journal. But the delusion persists, and I find it rampant in the literature of the suffragettes. Its propagation, I have no doubt, is fostered by three factors, the which I rehearse briefly:

(*a*) The idiotic vanity of men, leading to their eternal boasting, either by open lying or by dark hints.
(*b*) The notions of vice crusaders, Sunday-school superintendents and other such libidinous poltroons as to what they would do themselves if they had the courage.
(*c*) The ditto of certain suffragettes as to ditto ditto.

Here you have the genesis of the so-bogus generalization. Some pornographic Methodist, in the discharge of his enchanting duties as director of an anti-vice society, puts in an evening plowing through such books as "Night Life in Chicago," "The Confessions of a White Slave," "My Little Sister," the Cena Trimalchionis of Gaius Petronius and II Samuel. From this perusal he arises with the conviction that life amid the red lights must be one stupendous whirl of deviltry, that the shoe clerks he sees in Broadway at night are out for revels that would have caused a sensation in Sodom and Nineveh, that the average man who chooses hell and takes his chances leads an existence comparable to that of a Mormon bishop, that the world outside the Sunday school is packed like a sardine-can with betrayed salesladies, that every man who doesn't believe that Jonah swallowed the whale spends his whole leisure leaping through Hoop No. VII. "If I were a sinner," whispers the vice director into his own ear, "this as what I, the Rev. Jasper Barebones, would be doing. The late King David did it; he was human, and hence weak. The late King Edward VII was not beyond suspicion: the very numeral in his name has its suggestions. Millions of others go the same sinister route. . . . *Ergo*, Up guards, and at 'em! Bring me the pad of blank warrants! Order out the search-lights and scaling-ladders! Let

us chase these hell-hounds out of Christendom, and make the world safe for virtue, the home, and infant damnation!"

Thus the anointed of God, arguing fallaciously from his own secret ambitions. Where he makes his mistake is in assuming that the unconsecrated, while sharing his longing to be naughty, are free from his other weaknesses, *i. e.*, his timidity, his lack of resourcefulness, his conscience. As I have said, they are not. The vast majority of those who appear in the haunts of vice are there, not to engage in overt acts of ribaldry, but merely to tremble agreeably upon the edge of the abyss. They are the same timorous experimentalists, precisely, who throng the Midway at a world's fair, and go to burlesque shows, and take in hectic magazines, and read the sort of books that our Methodist friend reads. They like to conjure up the charm of devilishness, and to help out their somewhat sluggish imaginations by actual views of it, but when it comes to taking a header into the brimstone they usually fail to muster up the courage. For one shoe clerk who succumbs to the horrendous houris of the Broadway pave, there are 500 who succumb to lack of means, the warnings of Dr. Sylvanus Stall, and their own depressing consciences. For one "Fifth Avenue clubman"—*i. e.*, whiskey drummer or suburban deacon—who invades the department stores, engages the affections of some innocent miss, lures her into infamy and then sells her to the Italians, there are 1,000 who never get any further than asking the price of cologne water and emitting an oafish wink. And for one American husband who maintains a blonde stenographer in oriental luxury around the corner, there are 10,000 who are as true to their wives, year in and year out, as so many convicts in the death-house, and would be no more capable of any such loathsome malpractise than of cutting off the ears of their young.

I am sorry to blow up so much romance, but the facts are the facts, and curst be that dastard who would dodge them or pull their teeth. In particular, I am sorry for the suffragettes, for when they get into pantaloons at last, and have the vote and the new freedom, they will discover to their sorrow that they have been pursuing a chimera—that there is really no such animal as the male anarchist they have been denouncing and envying—that the so-called double standard, in a country so hag-ridden by moral qualms and hesitations as this one, has little more actual existence than honest advertising or free speech. They have followed the Sunday-school superintendents and pornomaniacs in embracing a piece of buncombe, and when the day of deliverance comes it will turn to ashes in their arms. Their error, as I say, lies in overestimating masculine independence, enterprise, sinfulness and courage. Men, in point of truth, are even more cowardly than women are—nay, many times. If the consequences, to a man, of the slightest descent from chemical purity, were one-tenth as swift and barbarous and overwhelming as the consequences to a young girl in like case, it would take a *capias ad computandum*, and perhaps even a *capias utlagatum*, to dredge up a single male flouter of that *lex talionis* in the whole of this grand and gaudy city of New York. As things stand today, even with the odds so vastly in his favor, the male hesitates and is thus not lost. Turn to the statistics of the vice crusaders if you doubt it. They show that the weekly and monthly receipts of female recruits upon the wharves of sin are always greater than the demand; that more young women enter upon the vermillion career than can make a living at it; that the pressure of the temptation they hold out constitutes a grave danger to our sophomores. What was the first act of the Army when it began penning its young clerks and college boys and plowhands in conscript camps? Its first act was to mark off a "moral zone" around each camp, and secure it with trenches and machine-guns, that the assembled *jeunesse* might be protected in their rectitude from the immoral be-

siegements of the propinquitous fair. *Quod erat demonstrandum.*

§ 2.

On a somewhat higher plane than the tracts of the suffragette viragos, but still full of sentimental fallacies, are such current works as "Woman," by Vance Thompson (*Dutton*), and "The Sexes in Science and History," by Eliza Burt Gamble (*Putnam*). A large part of Dr. Gamble's argument, for example, is based upon the following premiss:

> The beautiful coloring of male birds and fishes, and the various appendages acquired by males throughout the various orders below man, and which, so far as they themselves are concerned, serve no other useful purpose than to aid them in securing the favors of the females, have by the latter been turned to account in the processes of reproduction. The female made the male beautiful *that she might endure his caresses.*

The italics are mine. From this the learned doctor proceeds to argue that the male is little more than a chronic seducer, that his whole life is devoted to overcoming the reluctance of the coquettish and æsthetic female. In her own words: "Regarding males, outside of the instinct for self-preservation, which, by the way, is often overshadowed by their great sexual eagerness, no discriminating characters have been acquired and transmitted, *other than those which have been the result of passion,* namely, pugnacity and perserverance." Again the italics are mine. Well, what have we here? Merely the old, old delusion of masculine enterprise in amour, translated into quasi-scientific language—the Don Juan complex in a fresh bib and tucker. Dr. Gamble, of course, is speaking of the lower animals in the time of Noah. Now apply her theory to man today. Which sex actually does the primping and parading? Which runs to "beautiful coloring," sartorial, hirsute, facial? Which encases itself in gauds which "serve no other useful purpose than to aid in securing the favors" of the other sex? I leave the verdict to the jury. The more convincingly the ingenious doctor proves that the primeval mudhens and she-mackerel had to be anesthetized with spectacular decorations in order to "endure the caresses" of their beaux, the more she supports the Shavian thesis that, in the human society of today, the principal business of women is to snare and conquer men. In other words, her argument turns upon and devours itself. Carried literally to its last implication, it holds that women are all Donna Juanitas, and that, if they put off their millinery and cosmetics, men could not "endure their caresses."

To be sure, Dr. Gamble by no means draws this conclusion herself. On the contrary, she holds that the women of today are still victims of masculine rascality in amour, and that the coming millennium will set them free. But she can only reach this notion by admitting a contradiction into her chain of reasoning. On the one hand, she argues that splendor of attire is a bait to overcome the reluctance of the opposite sex, and on the other hand, at least by fair inference, she holds that it is not. My own inclination is toward her first position. It is supported, in the field of animal behavior, by the almost unanimous evidence of zoologists. It is supported, in the field of human behavior, by a large body of observation and experience. Shaw, as usual, did no more than state a platitude in scandalous terms—a trick that I have often exposed, and that I constantly employ myself (*e. g.,* in the present essay). If the thing had to wait for overtures from the male side, the business of marriage would blow up. Not one man in twenty makes any net gain by marriage; he may gain something, true enough, but he loses more. All the real profit is on the dexter side—and that is why all women, absolutely without exception, are eager to be married as soon as possible, and assiduous in attracting masculine attention, and pertinacious in trying to convert it into surrender. A normal man gives very little thought to

marriage. He may roll an eye toward a likely cutie now and then, but in the main he devotes himself to other and more agreeable concerns. But a woman, unless she be downright insane, thinks about it incessantly. She never so much as buys a pair of shoes or has a tooth plugged without considering, in the back of her mind, the probable effect upon some unsuspecting and God-forsaken candidate for her "reluctant" affections. It is from the entirely theoretical pursuit of this enormously shy and unwilling victim that she now bawls for deliverance. This is the truth in the "sex-freedom" babble.

§ 3

Both Dr. Gamble and Dr. Thompson appear to be convinced that marriage, at least in its present form, bears harshly upon women. The former says flatly that "the institution of marriage, as it now exists, will disappear"; the latter indulges himself in vague rumble-bumble about "an equitable partnership-contract with man, which will enable woman to fulfill her duty to the race without yielding up her equally cogent duty to herself." What both have in mind is this: that the marriage of tomorrow will offer even greater advantages to women than the marriage of today. With the highest respect, this seems to me to be folderol. The truth, as I apprehend it after 27 years of unremitting study, is that tomorrow will see a determined masculine revolt against the intolerable conditions of today—conditions which steadily impose an increased burden of duties upon the husband and as steadily take away his rights. A century ago the husband, by American law, was the head of the family firm. He had authority over the purse-strings, over the children, and even over the wife. He could enforce his mandates by appropriate punishments, including the corporal. His autonomy and self-respect were carefully guarded by legislation. Consider his changed position today. Today by the laws of most American states, laws passed, in most cases, by sentimental orgy—all of his old rights have been converted into duties. He no longer has any control over his wife's property; she may devote its income to the family or she may squander that income upon her own follies, and he can do nothing. She has equal authority in regulating and disposing of the children, and, in the case of infants, more than he. There is no law compelling her to do her share of the family labor: she may spend her whole time in moving picture parlors an she will. She cannot be forced to perpetuate the family name if she does not want to. She cannot be attacked with masculine weapons—*e. g.*, fists and firearms—when she makes an assault with feminine weapons—*e. g.*, snuffling, invective and sabotage. Finally, no lawful penalty can be visited upon her if she fails absolutely, either deliberately or through laziness, to keep the family habitat clean, the children in order and the victuals eatable.

Consider, now, the case of the husband. The instant he marries, his wife obtains a large and inalienable share of his property—in most states, one-third. He cannot dispose of it without her consent; he cannot even deprive her of it by will. She may bring up his children carelessly and idiotically, cursing them with abominable manners and poisoning their minds against him, and he has no redress. She may neglect her home, gad about all day, put uneatable food on his table, steal his small change, pry into his private papers, and lie about him to the neighbors—and he can do nothing. She may compromise his honor by indecent dressing, write letters to moving picture actors, and expose him to ridicule by joining the suffragettes—and he is helpless. But let him, for one single week, withdraw from her the means to finance these follies, let him make a single attempt to bring her to terms by cutting off her supplies—and she can hale him into court and have him sent to jail. In brief, *she* is under no legal obligation whatsoever to carry out her part of the

compact made at the altar of God, whereas *he* faces instant disgrace and punishment for the slightest failure to do so.

Such is human marriage in our fair republic. Such is the position of the husband under our *lex scripta*. The sentimentality of his own sex, reinforced by the demands of the suffragettes (whose actual though secret object, as I have hitherto shown, is the chimera of a so-called single standard of morality), has reduced him to a state of vassalage unmatched in any other country of Christendom. The moment he passes his head through the hymeneal knot, he is saddled with such a body of duties forthwith. And by exactly the same process his wife acquires a body of rights and prerogatives such as no despot now on earth could venture to claim without facing assassination instanter. Is it any wonder that sane men, in the presence of these facts, refrain from marriage as eagerly as they refrain from a mule's hind leg? Is it any wonder that women find it harder and harder to get husbands, so that many of them, despairing of succeeding by seemly means, turn to costumes which expose their persons in utter indecency, or to public activities which bring them into contact with men under false pretenses, or even to downright blackmail? Let us hear from Dr. Thompson on these points. Let us have from him a clear statement of the reasons, if any, which in logic and evidence urge any free man to embrace such hazards and take on such burdens.

§ 4

I have spoken of the husband's inability, given a lazy or incompetent wife, to force her to perform her domestic duties with diligence and skill. This inability is by no means merely theoretical; it lies heavily upon the gizzard of four American husbands out of five. The cause thereof is to be found in the fact that the rapid accession of wifely privileges hitherto rehearsed has filled the whole sex with a sense of freedom and irresponsibility, and fixed upon it the notion that a careful discharge of its duties is, in some vague way, discreditable and degrading. Thus the neglect of them takes on the character of a definite cult, and the stray woman who attends to them faithfully is laughed at as a drudge and a numskull, just as she is denounced as a "brood sow" (I quote literally, craving absolution for the phrase) if she favors her lord with progeny. The result is, on the one hand, the infernally bad cooking of These States—cooking so unspeakably distasteful to a cultured uvula that a French hack-driver, if it were set before him, would brain his wife with his linoleum hat. The second result is the abominable upbringing of American children, making cads and snobs of them. And the third (assuming three hands) is the general chaos and prodigality of American house-keeping, whereby the luxuries of life are put above its comforts, and waste is so lavish that a foreign expert, Dr. Hoover, has had to be imported to put it down.

All this, of course, is proof of the emancipation of the American woman. She has cast off the bonds which bind her sister of Europe, Asia, Africa and Oceania. Free from any obligation to squander her talents upon the ease and alimentation of her husband, and protected by the new laws in her liberty, she can devote her time to more stimulating business, *e. g.*, to shopping, politics and the uplift. Or, in time of war, to those bogus charities which cripple the army and get her picture into the papers. Meanwhile, her husband pursues his old round in the treadmill. If he cuts off her money, she can have him jailed for non-support. If he flees from her, she can jam him into the alimony club. If, exasperated, he attempts to correct her with the birch, he is good for a year in a reformatory. If, fearing to raise criminals, he takes his children to some place of safety, she can bring the catchpolls down upon him, have him slandered in